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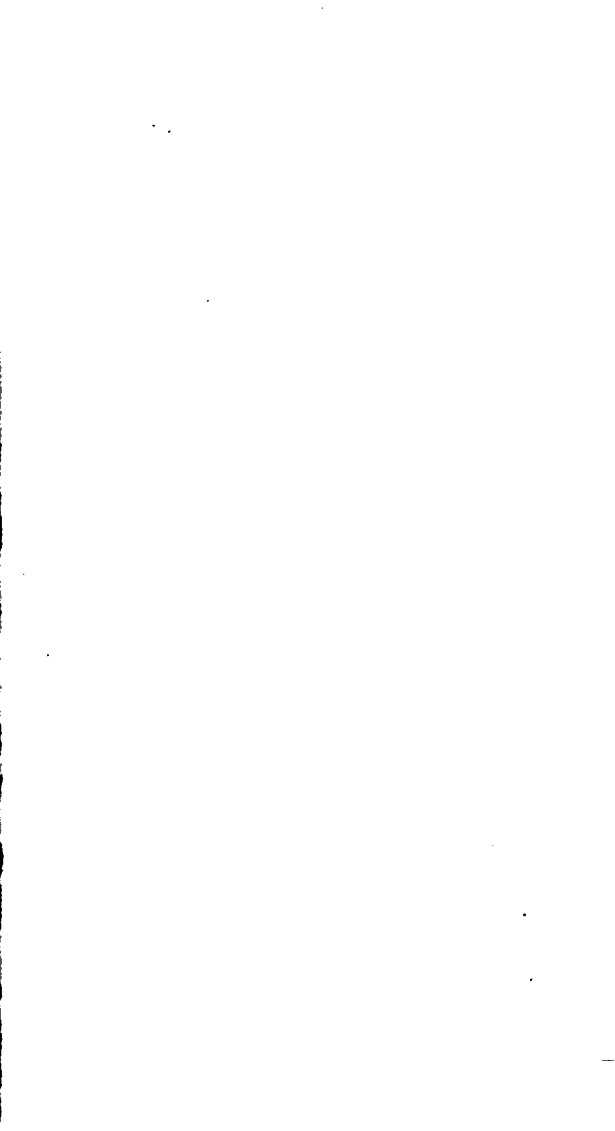
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OF EDUCATION**





DOMESTIC EDUCATION;

Heman

BY H. HUMPHREY, D. D.

PRESIDENT OF AMHERST COLLEGE.

For I know him that he will command his children and his household after him and they shall keep the way of the Lord.

Gen. 12 : 17.

AMHERST:

J. S. & C. ADAMS, PUBLISHERS.

1840.

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TO ALL THE
HEADS OF YOUNG FAMILIES,
WHO MAY WISH TO POSSESS IT,
IS THIS LITTLE VOLUME
MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,
BY THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THE readers of the New York Observer will remember, that during the last year, a regular series of papers appeared in that widely circulated Journal, entitled **THOUGHTS ON EDUCATION.** In those numbers, the writer confined himself to one branch of the subject, namely, *Domestic Education*, intending, should health and leisure be granted him, to pursue and carry out his original plan, in two other series, the one upon Popular, and the other upon Classical Education.

HIS *Thoughts on Domestic Education*, having been received with more favor than he had ventured to anticipate, and the hope having been expressed in various quarters, both near and remote, especially by young mothers, that they might ere long appear in a more convenient and permanent form, he has been encouraged to give them a careful revision, and to add several chapters of new matter.

He has also inserted, by way of Appendix, at the end of the volume, some twenty or thirty pages upon Domestic Education, from the London Christian Observer, for

which he is quite sure of receiving the thanks of every serious and intelligent reader.

Such as they are, these THOUGHTS are now offered to the public, as a sort of Domestic Manual, with fervent supplications, to Almighty God, that he will be graciously pleased to add his blessing, without which, the author is fully aware, that he will have "labored in vain and spent his strength for nought and in vain."

Amherst College, April 15, 1840.

NOTE.—The Reader will rectify in part of the copies of this work, the following errors, viz., page 198, 7th and 8th line from top, for "frequent," read *pregnant*—14th line, for "exerts," read *erects*.

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INTRODUCTION.

DOMESTIC EDUCATION.

“**EDUCATION!** What new thoughts,” the kind reader may be ready to ask, “can any body have to offer, at this late day, upon the most hackneyed subject in the world?” Very few, if any, perhaps; but it sometimes happens, that in the rage for new thoughts and new plans and new patents, the *old* are repudiated, not because they have lost any of their intrinsic value, but to gratify the ever restless love of novelty, and to show how much wiser we are than all former generations. I am so far from being an enemy to *new* thoughts and plans for the intellectual and moral improvement of society, that I should be extremely glad to have more of them suggested to my own mind than I fear are ever likely to be; and I could easily name individuals now on the stage, whose writings and labors in the various departments of education, entitle them richly to the gratitude of their country. The mere *newness* of anything, however, does not prove that it ought to be received and adopted; nor its *oldness* that it ought to be rejected. A new house may be vastly handsomer than the old one, which was pulled down to make room for it, and yet not be half so convenient, or durable. And if some new and showy style of arch-

itecture were to come into general favor, to the exclusion, for a time, of both the Grecian and Gothic orders, because they are so old fashioned, would that prove the new to be either more solid or more beautiful?

Among the Greek Classics, Homer is a very old poet. In English literature, Shakspeare and Milton are old writers, and the poetry of the Bible is older than either; but are all these cast into the shade by the new pica and gilt binding of the nineteenth century? With me, I confess, (as is wont to be the case with men of stereotyped notions,) it is rather a recommendation to anything than the contrary, that it is time-worn. One thing which I have learned, or at least, which I seem to myself to have learned, is, that the most valuable thoughts on every subject are likely to be the most current; and that whatever is commonplace, has become so on account of its conveying some sentiment of peculiar interest or importance. What can be more perfectly thread-bare than the couplet,

“ ’Tis education forms the common mind—
Just as the twig is bent, the tree ’s inclined ? ”

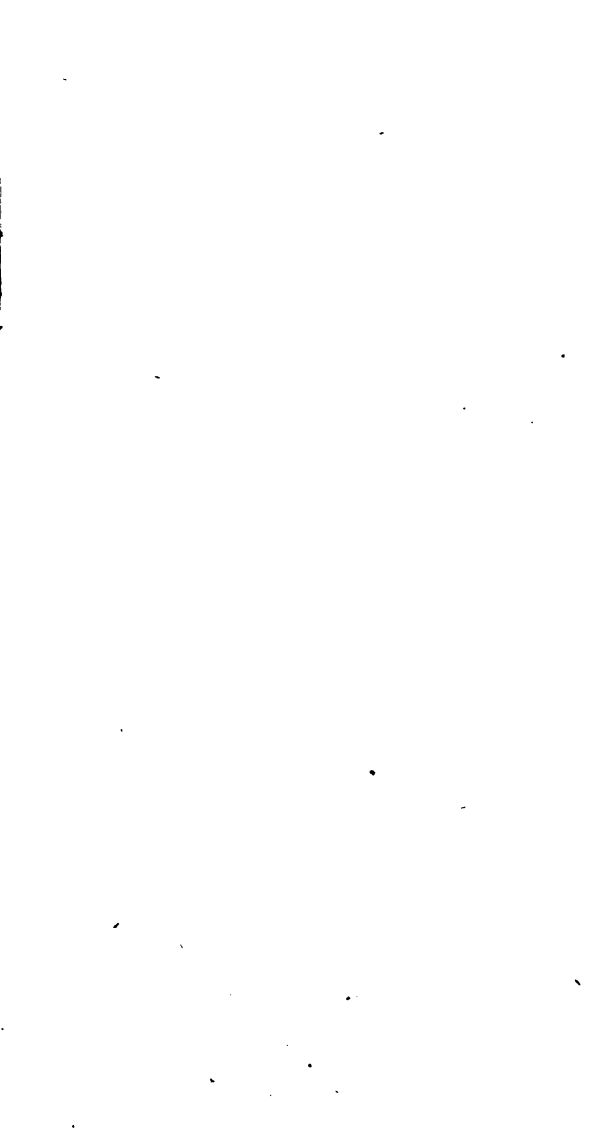
And what other reason can be assigned for its being worn out, but that it is so striking and so true? At the same time, no one whose opinion is entitled to any regard, will pretend to say, that all the improvements have been made, in any branch of education, which are to be hoped for. To whatever quarter we turn our eyes, a wide field is yet open before us.

In regard to the thoughts which I propose to offer on the subject, I shall not trouble myself to inquire whether they are *old* or *new*, and for two reasons. In the first place, it would often be impossible for me to

tell, whether I have derived them from books, or from observation and reflection ; and in the next place, I am sure the main question with the reader will be, not whether the suggestions were ever made before, but whether they are worth being read and remembered.

I hardly know of a general term so comprehensive as *Education*. It is much more so than law, or politics—than government or religion. Very few seem to be aware how much it means—how many things it includes. What is ordinarily called a *good* education, a *fine* education, a *finished* education, and the like, may be extremely defective in many important respects. It may not have been commenced early enough in the nursery. It may have been subsequently neglected or badly conducted in the family. It may have regarded the child mainly as an intellectual and social being, taking little cognizance of the conscience or the heart. It may have left the will unsubdued, and all the unruly passions without any adequate restraint. A person who has no aims beyond the farm, or the mechanic's shop, is said to be well educated when he can read and write and use figures well ; when he knows how to cultivate the land, or has been faithfully initiated into the mysteries of his trade ; although he may never have been taught to "fear God and keep his commandments." It is said of a school master, an engineer, a merchant, a lawyer, a physician, a clergyman, a professor, or a statesman, that he is well educated, when he has enjoyed good advantages in the schools, and is thoroughly acquainted with his business or profession. How strange would it sound for any body to deny, that Voltaire and Rousseau, that Hume and Gibbon were well educated men ! And yet there must have been some great deficiency in







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human power and skill could ever, after that, build a city, or even erect the humblest human habitation?

Every family is a little state, or empire within itself, bound together by the most endearing attractions, and governed by its patriarchal head, with whose prerogative no power on earth has a right to interfere. Nations may change their forms of government at pleasure, and may enjoy a high degree of prosperity under different constitutions; and perhaps the time will never come, when any *one* form will be adapted to the circumstances of all mankind. But in the family organization there is but one model, for all times and all places. It is just the same now, as it was in the beginning, and it is impossible to alter it, without marring its beauty, and directly contravening the wisdom and benevolence of the Creator. It is at once the simplest, the safest and the most efficient organization that can be conceived of. Like everything else, it may be perverted to bad purposes; but it is a divine model, and must not be altered.

Every father is the constituted head and ruler of his household. God has made him the supreme earthly legislator over his children, accountable, of course, to Himself, for the manner in which he executes his trust; but amenable to no other power, except in the most extreme cases of neglect, or abuse. The will of the parent is the law to which the child is bound in all cases to submit, unless it plainly contravenes the law of God. Children are brought into existence and placed in families, not to follow their own wayward inclinations, but to look up to their parents for guidance; not to teach, but to be taught; not to govern but to be governed. You may think that your neighbor's family is badly managed. You may see

and know, that the education of his children is greatly neglected, and that he has not a single patriarchal qualification. Under these circumstances you may *advise* him as earnestly as you please—you may point out his duties—you may expostulate with him—you may adjure him by all that is tender and sacred, to consider where he stands, and to think of the account which he must render; but if he turns a deaf ear, you have no remedy. God has placed him and not you at the head of his family. You have no right, if you had the inclination, to enter his house, and order him to stand aside, and assume the reins of government yourself, and absolve his children from their natural allegiance. It may be true that they would be infinitely better off under your control and instruction than his; but you may not thus interfere with one of God's ordinances. Such a general allowance would subvert the whole domestic system.

Nor has *civil government* any right to interfere with the head of a family, unless it be where he is guilty of extreme neglect, or abuse. If he becomes a sot, or a reprobate in any other form of abandonment; or if he plays the tyrant in his own house, so as to put the lives of his children in jeopardy, it is no doubt the right and the duty of the magistrate to come to their rescue. It is an extreme case, and none but extreme remedies will reach it. But in all ordinary cases, even of great delinquency, the guilty parent must be left to answer for his abuse of power, or neglect of duty, to him who "ruleth over all." It would be impossible for any government in the world, to take upon itself parental authority and discharge parental duties; and if it were possible, such an innovation would soon derange and destroy the whole social system.

And as no power on earth may forcibly take the reins out of a parent's hands, neither may he abandon his post, or refuse to act as the vicegerent of God in his own house. When a father finds himself surrounded by a rising family, it is too late for him to decide whether or not he will assume the responsibility of supporting and educating his children. That question is already settled. "Necessity is laid upon him." "If any man provide not for his own, and especially for these of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but *bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*" "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shall talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." These are duties which every head of a family *must* perform. If he neglect them, it is at his peril. He may be disposed to abandon his children, and throw them upon the world, as some in fact do; or he may say, "Though I am willing to feed and clothe them, I must decline the reins of government, and all care of their education." But no—however unfit he may find himself to discharge the duties of a parent, or however anxious he may be to shift them off upon somebody else, he must stand in his lot and meet them the best way he can. He is not indeed precluded from availing himself of the assistance of others, by sending his children abroad for a part of their education, when he thinks it will be for their advantage; but let him not forget that he is accountable to God for the judicious exercise of this discretion. The author-

ity which he cannot exercise over his children when they are away from home, he must delegate to those who receive them under their care ; and in no case may he place them where they will be le't to themselves, and exposed without counsel or restraint, to bad influences.

Nowhere, perhaps, are the wisdom and benevolence of God more conspicuous, than in the domestic economy. He has thrown a great many silken cords around the hearts of parents, and he keeps motives continually before their minds, which must make them faithful to their offspring, if anything could. Parental love is among the strongest and most unquenchable of human affections. " Can a woman forget her sucking child ? " This is so nearly impossible, that when it happens it indicates the last stage of desperation. We know, indeed, that the love of children, strong as it is, does not always insure them the blessings of a good education. But in the absence of piety and high moral principle, it excites to watchfulness and stimulates to efforts from which they reap exceedingly important advantages. Thousands are far better educated in every respect, than they would be in the absence of strong parental affection. Parents can hardly help feeling a deep interest in their own flesh and blood. They love to see their children happy ; and when they have any forethought at all, they cannot but perceive, that much must depend upon early training and early habits. And then, as it respects themselves, they must be very depraved indeed, not to know that their own happiness is indissolubly linked with the good behavior and good principles of their children. It is difficult for a father to make himself so great a reprobate, as not to be afflicted with the misconduct of a reprobate son. Most

parents look forward to the time when they shall need props to lean upon ; and it requires but very little good sense to see that if they neglect their children's education, leaving them to grow up in ignorance and vice, they can expect little else but ingratitude and cruel neglect in return. This is but a glance at the important ends which are answered by the strength of natural affection in family education. It is a theme on which I might greatly enlarge ; but as I feel bound to study brevity, and as most of the thoughts which I could suggest are common thoughts, I will not trouble the reader with them.

CHAPTER II.

Family Government—Its importance—Its growing laxity in this country—Its salutary effects upon the hearts of children—More difficult than bachelors and maiden aunts are apt to suppose—Should be commenced very early—Should be uniform—Should be impartial—Requires unity of feeling, judgment and action—Must be carried through—Everything depends on a good beginning—Should be continued through the whole period of the child's minority—Must be absolute.

THE importance of family government will scarcely be questioned by any one, and we of this generation are quite ready to flatter ourselves that we understand it better than our fathers did. Whether we do or not, will, in the lapse of time, be submitted to a more impartial judgment. I am sure, that could those who have been gone a hundred years, return to the "places which knew them," they would be at a loss to guess how we expect to substantiate such a claim in the eyes of posterity.

Although, as I have already remarked, the state has no right to interfere with the domestic arrangements of families, except in extreme cases, it is nevertheless true, that in order to become good citizens in after life, children must be accustomed to cheerful subordination in the family, from their earliest recollection. I know that those who grow up without restraint by the fire-side, and whose youth is consequently as wild as the winds, *can* be governed afterwards by absolute power. The bayonet of the Czar and the scimitar of

the Sultan, can tame them and keep them in subjection. But it may well be doubted, whether anything like a free constitutional government can ever be maintained over a people, who have not been taught the fifth commandment in their childhood. I do not believe it can. Children must be prepared to reverence the majesty of the laws, and to yield a prompt obedience to the civil magistrate, by habitual subjection to their parents. If they are not governed in the family, they will be restive under all the wholesome and necessary restraints of after life; and the freer the form of government is, in any state, the more necessary is it that parents should fit their children "to lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty" under it, by a proper course of domestic training. We cannot, in this country, hope to preserve and hand down our free and glorious institutions in any other way. To remain free, the mass of the people must be virtuous and enlightened; and to this end, domestic education, including all suitable restraints and discipline, must engage the earnest attention of heads of families throughout the land. It has been said a thousand times, that the practicability of maintaining a highly republican form of government has been *tried* and is *settled* in the United States, however it may have failed everywhere else. I wish it were so: but I am afraid the question is settled, so far *only* as we have gone. What the future may disclose, who can certainly tell? It is yet a grand desideratum, whether we have religion and virtue and intelligence enough to sustain our blessed institutions. The danger is, that our liberties will degenerate into licentiousness, and that the growing laxity of family government in this country will hasten on the fearful crisis. There is, if I am not deceived, a re-

action in our unparalleled political freedom, upon our domestic relations. It is more difficult than it was, half, or even a quarter of a century ago, for parents to "command their household after them." Our children hear so much about liberty and equality, and are so often told how glorious it is to be "born free and equal," that it is hard work to make them understand for what good reason their liberties are abridged in the family; and I have no doubt this accounts, in multitudes of instances, for the reluctance with which they submit to parental authority. The boy wants to be "his own man," long before his wisdom teeth are cut; and the danger lies in conceding the point to him under the notion, that our fathers were quite too rigid and that a more indulgent domestic policy, corresponding with the "spirit of the age," is better. This may be the way to make *rulers* enough for a hundred republics; but not to make a single good *subject*. I repeat, therefore, that if it is important to secure a prompt obedience to the wholesome laws of the state, then is family government indispensably necessary, and the father who takes no care to control his own sons, is not himself a patriot, if he is a good citizen.

Moreover, without family government there will be very little *self-government* in any community. If you do not restrain the waywardness of your child, in its early developments, and thus assist him to get the mastery of it while yet the conquest is comparatively easy, it will be in vain for you to expect him ever to gain that self-control which is so essential to his happiness and safety. Nothing is better settled by the experience of all ages, than that the will grows stubborn—that evil passions become impetuous by indulgence; and that indulged they will be, by the child, if they

are not held in check by parental authority. In this view, a greater misfortune can hardly befall a young person, than to be left to himself. The consequence is, that before reason and conscience can assert their supremacy, bad habits are formed, and his depraved inclinations have time to ripen into such maturity, that to bring them into subjection is infinitely more difficult than if the work had been commenced in the nursery. One in a hundred perhaps, may, without aid, learn to "rule his own spirit;" but it will cost him many a hard struggle; while the ninety and nine will never have resolution and perseverance enough to achieve any tolerable degree of self-control. How many slaves to an irascible temper have lamented to their dying day, that their fathers did so little to check its early growth! But what individual, in after life, was ever sorry for the aid which he received from his parents in mastering his own bad passions?

There is one thought more, which may not perhaps so readily occur, but which is too important to be overlooked in this connection. The judicious and faithful exercise of family government puts children in the way of receiving spiritual blessings. I am not one of those who believe that any human agency, or moral suasion can convert the soul to God. Bringing up a child under perfect subjection to parental authority, is not bringing him to the foot of the cross. Still, I cannot entertain a doubt, that the child who is well governed in his father's house, is more likely to be brought to a willing submission to God, than if he had been left to "walk in the way of his own heart, and after the sight of his own eyes." I know the best governed son in the world may hold out in rebellion against his heavenly Father till he dies; but there is a great deal

more reason to hope he will "throw down his arms," than in the case of one who has never been taught the first lessons of submission in the family. Let me guard with all possible care against being misunderstood. No power on earth can conquer the stubborn will of the sinner, however young. But there is a divine constitution, by which means and ends are more remotely, or more immediately connected together; and why may not parental fidelity in the government of a family be made a principal means of bringing them to the "obedience of Christ?"

So pertinent and just, in my opinion, are the following remarks of a very sensible writer in the Christian Observer on this subject, that I cannot withhold them from the reader.

"One main end of education, indeed, in the case of very young children the grand object which the parent ought to have in view, is to subdue their self-will; to teach their minds to bow implicitly to parental authority, that they may more readily bow in after life, to the will of God. The parent who neglects this prime duty, will not only be the artificer of much future unhappiness to his children, but may have to answer for the loss of their souls. There is no christian parent, who would not be shocked to hear his child swear. He would feel that by permitting him to grow up in the habitual breach of the third commandment, he should be accessory to his ruin; and he would deem it his urgent duty to cure him of this vice. But is the fifth commandment less binding, than the third? May a parent without guilt, permit the open violation of the one, any more than of the other? We confess, that we have been frequently astonished at the frivolous evasions, by which persons who even make a high pro-

fession of religion, endeavor to palliate to others, their criminal negligence in this respect, and to hide from themselves the extent of their guilt; and we entreat them, if they have any regard to their own peace, or that of their children, to consider, as in the sight of God, what his word requires of them as christian parents."—(*Christian Observer*, 1808.)

It is thought by some, that the government of children must be very easy, if not even a delightful task. I do not recollect, however, that I ever heard this sentiment expressed by a parent who had been placed in circumstances to make the trial, and who had succeeded in any tolerable degree. As a general rule, persons know how to manage families much better before they have them, than afterwards. Those who are most astonished at the failure of their friends in this important matter, and see no difficulty at all in holding the reins, have no children to govern. The bachelor who boards in his brother's family, or goes to spend a few weeks with a married sister, understands the thing perfectly, and can discourse most eloquently upon family government, by the hour together. He has it all at his fingers ends, from A to Z, and knows exactly what to do from sunrise till bed-time. O how he wishes he could have the management of these lawless little urchins for a month. He would stop their crying and romping, or he would quit the premises. How parents can have so little tact, and be so indulgent, is entirely beyond his comprehension. But it is often exceedingly amusing to see how the tables are turned, when he comes to have a family of his own. Poor man! the children spoil his beautiful theories a great deal faster than he ever made them. What the matter is, he cannot tell; but it is infinitely more difficult to govern children than it used to be.

Heads of families, in like manner, who have no children of their own, are very apt to think that their friends who have, are very unfortunate, or very much to blame for not keeping them under better subjection. O, if they had the management of them, they should be governed to a charm! It should always be sunshine. Every look should be a law, and it should be obeyed. Or if it should sometimes be necessary to go a little further, every word of reproof should be treasured up and remembered to the end of life. But how does the matter stand, when these same persons come to adopt a child, and bring their theories to the test of experience? In nine instances out of ten, they find the task incomparably more difficult than they expected. It is one thing to build castles in the air, and another to garrison them. They are sure the child is uncommonly perverse, or that if it were their *own* child they could manage it a great deal better. But the sober truth is, that whatever else may be easy, the bringing up of a family is a great undertaking. To govern one's own house just as it should be governed, is exceedingly difficult, and the parent who has the talent, and who is enabled to use it as he ought, can never be thankful enough to God for so invaluable a gift.

It has always been a question, how early children become the proper subjects of parental training, and whether they should be subjected to any kind of authority or restraint, before they are capable of being influenced as moral and accountable agents. That during the first few days of its life, an infant can no more be brought under government, than any of the lower animals, I suppose all will agree; and the decided opinion of some, perhaps of the majority, is, that nothing like discipline should be attempted, till the child is old

enough to understand the reason of it. To this opinion, after some experience and the maturest reflection, I cannot subscribe. I regard the question merely as a question of *fact*, and not as involving the accountable agency of the child at all. How early *can* you begin to check its peevishness, and mold its temper to your wishes? If you can safely and with any advantage begin, when the infant is three or six months old, it is a point of no importance with me, how low it is found on the scale of moral agency. As God has nowhere told me, that I must wait till my child can reason and feel itself to blame for crying and showing a bad temper, before I attempt to lay it under any restraint, I consider myself authorized, nay, bound to take it in hand, just as soon as I can bend the twig in a right direction.

Without, therefore, pretending to fix upon the earliest week, or month, I do not hesitate to give it as my opinion, that considerable progress may be made under *six* months, if not under *four*; and that parental authority ought to be well established within the first year and a quarter. It has been done a thousand times, and why should it not be done a thousand more? The best governed children, and will the reader pardon me if I add, the only well governed children are those who are brought into complete subjection in the nursery; and most of them at so early a day, that they cannot remember when, half choked by their stubborn wills, they first lisped out, "*I won't*" to try the great question of mastery with their mothers, and were conquered. One thing every body must admit—children are capable of showing, plainly enough, to what race they belong, at a very tender age. It is astonishing to see how early the spirited little fellow will stiffen its body,

and throw back its head, and kick and strike, and put forth other demonstrations of its high displeasure : and who can doubt, that when these signs of depravity appear, it is time for the parent to enter on a course of counteraction and repression ?

Every nurse must have observed that infants begin to form habits, troublesome or otherwise, almost as soon as they begin to breathe. Lay them quietly down at first, and they will soon become accustomed to it, so as to relieve you of a great deal of care. Rock them to sleep a few times, and you must do it always. Carry them about the room for a single day in your arms, when they are uneasy, and they will find you exercise enough for the rest of the year. Now why should you not as early as possible take advantage of this extreme ductility, to mold them into all good habits, including the most important of all, a cheerful submission to your authority ? As it is easy to accustom children, before they are a year old, to go to bed alone in the dark, and exceedingly delightful to hear them cooing and talking themselves to sleep, so may they unquestionably be brought to yield implicitly to the look and the voice of a parent, at the tenderest age ; and when the habit is thus early formed, it saves infinite trouble to both.

Waiving entirely, for the present, the question whether the rod is ever to be used in the administration of family government, I remark in the

First place, that *this government should be uniform*. This is a point in which a great many worthy heads of families show their almost utter want of tact and good judgment ; and failing here, they succeed but poorly in all their efforts to establish and maintain the authority which God has made it their duty to

exercise, over their own households. There is no reason to doubt, that parents of this class love their children as tenderly as any other class; and it is certain, that many of them intend to be conscientious and faithful in the discharge of all their duties. Their theory of government may be perfectly correct, and they begin quite well, perhaps. They bring the child to terms, and make him feel that direct resistance to their will is hopeless and out of the question. But they do not carry an even hand. Now they are strict even to a fault, and anon they vibrate to the opposite extreme. What they forbid one day they allow the next. There is no certainty, no uniformity in their administration. Their own temperament is fitful. They are governed more by the east wind, than by a sober judgment. The child, if it does wrong, is in greater danger before dinner than after. He is punished, perhaps, too severely one hour, and stuffed with cake and sugar plums the next, to square the account.

Now such an administration will never succeed. Children must know what to depend upon. You must give them no reason to apprehend too great displeasure on the one hand, nor to hope for extreme lenity on the other. Having settled in your own minds what is right, what obedience your children owe you, and what authority it is your duty to exercise over them you must hold a steady rein. What you are and what you require to-day, you must be and must require to-morrow. Giving with one hand and taking with the other,—doing and undoing,—demanding all, and then yielding more than all, is worse than lost labor. No government can be efficient, whether civil or domestic, where there is a great want of uniformity and consistency in the administration.

Secondly: *family government should be strictly impartial.*

Nothing can be more destructive of domestic harmony than parental *favoritism*. So long as children of the same family differ essentially in their characters and dispositions, (and this is often the case,) so long as some are gentle, affectionate, and obedient, and others stubborn and unfilial, it is impossible for any parent to regard them alike; and if he could, it would only show his want of moral discrimination. He must approve and disapprove, reward and punish, with a strict regard to personal character. This is the great principle on which every good government is administered. So far as parental love consists in *complacency*, a father may certainly love a dutiful better than an undutiful son. Indeed, he cannot help it, and there is no partiality in this. But if he indulges one child more than another,—if he punishes John and lets James go free,—if he is blind to the faults of one and severe to mark those of another,—he is partial, and can never in this way govern his family well. His children will see and feel the wrong. If those who have reason to complain obey him, it will be from fear and not from affection; and he will be so far from securing the reverence and gratitude of his favorites, that they will be the first to despise his authority and “bring down his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.” If a perverse child will complain, because his privileges are abridged, and he is made to eat the bitter fruits of his own ways, there is no help for it. He might restore himself to the standing and affection which he has forfeited, if he would; and he has no more right to say, when he is punished and others are rewarded, that injustice is done him, than the thief has to complain, that he is

imprisoned while his honest neighbors are unmolested. But while this is true on the one hand, let every parent guard as much as possible against all appearance of partiality on the other; and the moment the prodigal returns, and says, "Father, I have sinned," let him be received with open arms, however far he may have wandered, and whatever grief he may have occasioned.

Thirdly : *family government requires unity of feeling, judgment and action.*

If parents are not of one heart and one mind, in regard to this matter, it will be found extremely difficult, if not impossible, to rule their household well. And how many families suffer from this want of *unity* ! The father and mother, instead of "seeing eye to eye," and directing all their efforts to one point, differ essentially, both in theory and practice. As they do not think alike, they move in opposite directions. One parent, perhaps, is too stern, and the other too lax and indulgent. Or if one has correct views of parental authority, and the manner in which it should be exercised, the other looks at the whole subject in a very erroneous point of light. What one regards as a serious fault, the other overlooks as an excusable foible. Where one thinks the rod is called for, the other is entirely opposed to it. Where one is actuated by principle and good judgment, in the painful administration of necessary discipline, the other is swayed by a morbid tenderness, which would screen the little culprit, perhaps to his undoing.

I am aware that a perfect agreement in regard to the most judicious system of family government, cannot in all cases be expected. The father and mother may not be able, though they earnestly desire it, to think alike on this subject; nor, perhaps, upon some others,

of great practical moment. This is exceedingly to be regretted ; but although you may differ in *judgment*, you may sustain each other in *action*, and you must do it, or your authority is gone. What can the father do if the mother takes the part of the child ? Or what can the mother do, if the father comes in and takes the darling boy out of her hands ? Discuss these matters between yourselves as much as you please ; but never let your children know or suspect, that you are not perfectly agreed. A mother, will sometimes think that the father is too severe ; and let her convince him of it if she can, as soon as they are alone. A father, in his turn, will sometimes think the mother injudicious ; and let him do the same. But never let either interfere at the time. Suppose the most trying case that is likely to happen ; suppose the child to be punished a little beyond its demerits ; how trifling is the momentary suffering, compared with the mischief which would result from that kind of interference, of which I am here speaking ! Think alike, if possible. At all events, strengthen each other's hands, and never *seem* to differ. Let your children see, that in the administration of government, you are one,—that you have one heart and one aim,—and that nothing is to be hoped for, from any appeal that can be made to either. Take the opposite course ; let the jarring of interfering and conflicting action be felt, and your house being “divided against itself cannot stand.” Your own opinion may be, that you better know how to bend the twig than your wife, or your husband, as the case may be. If this be true, render thanks to God for giving you the talent, and make the most of it ; but never use it to weaken the authority of your com-

panion, who after all, will sometimes be nearer right, than yourself.

Fourthly : it is essential to a wise and efficient domestic administration, *that each parent should carry through any course of discipline that he or she undertakes, without any direct assistance from the other.* In almost every such case, either to offer aid or apply for it, weakens the authority which it is intended to strengthen. Whenever a father undertakes to subdue a perverse child, he must do it effectually, without looking anywhere but to God for help, and without accepting it, should it be ever so kindly offered. If the boy sees that he needs or receives any extraneous aid, his authority is weakened. In like manner, whenever the mother commands, she must be obeyed ; and if there is any resistance, she must be left to overcome it by herself, especially in the nursery. The father may, perhaps, be convinced, that he could accomplish the object sooner than the mother, and may wish to relieve her from the painful struggle in which he sees her engaged, but it will never do. What she has begun, she must finish. The child must yield, and must yield to *her*, and not to somebody else. She may regret that she did not leave the task to stronger nerves ; but there is no retreat ; she must carry her point, or her authority will be despised. Every case of this sort, no doubt, ought to be well considered, and as far as practicable, agreed upon beforehand ; and if an older child requires discipline, the father ought in most cases to undertake it. But the point on which I insist is, that what either parent actually undertakes, must be finished without any direct or obvious help from the other.

Fifthly : *that in the government of a family, every*

thing depends upon a good beginning. If you fail here, very faint is the prospect that you will ever succeed. If your *first* child is not well trained, and brought under entire subjection to your authority, you will find it extremely difficult to rule your household well afterwards. What can you do with the younger children, how can you expect they will reverence and obey you, when they have the example of headiness and insubordination in an older brother, constantly before their eyes? As "one sinner destroyeth much good" in a community, so does one ungoverned child in a family; and above all, if he be the *eldest*. It would be next to a miracle, if his example did not prove a permanent source of contagion.

On the other hand, if you succeed happily in the management of your first-born; if he is docile, obedient and affectionate from the cradle, he will help you exceedingly, by the influence of his example upon the minds, tempers and habits of his younger brothers and sisters. The principle or instinct of imitation, as every one knows, is much stronger in early childhood than at any other period of life; and nowhere is it so strong as in the domestic circle. It is the electrical wire, which the eldest holds in his hand, and by which he communicates the spark to all the rest at pleasure. If, by the blessing of God, you succeed well in your first endeavors; if the early establishment of your authority is unquestionable and unquestioned by your own fire-side, the prospect is fair, that with comparatively little trouble, you will secure the cheerful obedience of all your children; but if you stumble at the threshold, you can scarcely expect ever to recover from the shock. If you cannot mold the temper and habits of *one* child to your wishes, how can you man-

age *several*, under all the disadvantages, arising from his bad example ?

But perhaps your first-born is your *only* child ; and if so, you will need to be especially on your guard against the undue ascendancy of those parental yearnings, which bind it so closely to your hearts. It is a common remark, founded on observation and experience, that an only son or daughter is in great danger of suffering by too much indulgence, if not of being spoiled ; and quite certain I am, that it requires more self-denial to thwart the wishes and curb the temper of an only child, than it would if he were but one of a numerous family. If you do not watch and pray without ceasing, the dear little creature, upon whom your fondest hopes and affections are concentrated, will take undue liberties ; and in one way or another, make dangerous encroachments upon that authority with which God has clothed you, and for the proper exercise of which he holds you accountable. Depend upon it, if you yield to the importunities of your son, or spare him when he does wrong, because you have but *one*, and cannot bear to deny or chastise him, he is getting the mastery of you, to your certain retribution for unfaithfulness, and probably to his own undoing. Say not then, he is my *all*, and therefore I cannot deny him ; I cannot be severe in marking his faults ; but rather say, that *as* he is my all, it becomes me to be the more exact and faithful in the discharge of all my parental duties.

Sixthly : *the rights and duties of parents, in this regard, extend through the whole period of the child's minority.* It is not enough for parents to bring their children early under proper subjection, and then leave their authority to take care of itself. There is no such

executive energy in any domestic code, however wise or reasonable. The work is only commenced, when you have subdued the refractory spirit of your child. It is indeed an auspicious beginning; and if you keep the advantage which you have gained, the task will ever after be comparatively easy. But you must never let go the reins. If you relax, if you leave the child after it has once yielded, to follow its own depraved inclinations, it will soon become as head-strong as ever; and if it does not get entirely beyond your reach, it may cost you infinite trouble to regain the ground which you have lost. All the natural tendencies in the minds of our children are downward; and there is no overcoming this gravitating power, but by constant effort. "Line must be upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little."

A judicious parent will not use exactly the same means to govern a boy of eight years old, as he does to govern a child of two; nor will he deal with a grown up son of fifteen, just as he does with a lad of ten. But though the *means* will be different, the *end* is the same. The young man of twenty, in his father's house, has no more right to say that he will use his own discretion, in regard to observing the rules and regulations of the family, than a child of ten; and that parent sins against God, against the community in which he lives, and against his own family, who throws up his authority, before his children can safely be left to govern and take care of themselves. What a heavenly example has Jesus Christ left, for the imitation of all children, down to the end of the world. When, after three days' anxious search, his parents "found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions,"

what did he do? Did he decline going home and being any longer under their control? No. "He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was *subject* unto them." Let every son of twelve years old, who begins to feel restive under parental authority, and most undutifully to hanker after independence in his father's house, turn to Luke *second*, and read from the *forty-first* verse, to the end of the chapter, and blush to think of the contrast between his undutifulness, and the filial obedience of the Savior of the world!

Seventhly : *family government, to be well and successfully administered, must be absolute.* Gentle reader, startle not at this proposition, as if it were some autocratical *ukase* in the empire of education. Pronounce it not false and dangerous, till you have taken time to think of it, and candidly to weigh the few thoughts which I have to suggest in its defence. I am sensible, that nothing in the English vocabulary grates so harshly upon republican ears, as the word *absolute*. To talk of an absolute government any where, within the protection of our stars and stripes, is calculated to stir up the spirit of *seventy-six* from ocean to ocean ; and to call forth a voice of denunciation louder than "seven thunders." But hear me patiently, and then judge.

Is an absolute government *necessarily* despotic and oppressive? What will you then say of the highest and most perfect government in the universe? Does not the great Father of the whole human family govern it with a perfect sway? Can any one stay his hand, or resist his will? The objection, therefore, lies not against this *form* of government, but against the almost certain *mal-administration* of it, in the hands of

any earthly ruler. In an absolute monarchy, the will of the sovereign is the supreme law of the land. All power, legislative, judicial and executive, is vested in him. If he abuses it, he is a tyrant. If he wields it to oppress the people, he is a despot. But he is not obliged to be a despot, because he is absolute. He might reign in righteousness, and in all his measures have a supreme regard to the happiness of his subjects; and if such a ruler could be found, endowed with wisdom, too, equal to his virtue, we might expect that his reign would be pre-eminently beneficent and prosperous. But this there seems to be no reason to look for, till "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ."

Any government is absolute, where the will of the head is the supreme law; or in other words, where there are no co-ordinate powers to modify and control it. And this is what I mean, when I say that family government must be absolute;—not *tyrannical*,—not *despotic*,—as far from it as possible;—but *supreme*. A patriarchal government cannot be otherwise. The moment you modify it, in any way, it ceases to be patriarchal. Every parent *must* make the laws in his own little empire, and must see that they are obeyed. This, as I remarked in a former chapter, is the divine institution. Parents are placed at the head of their respective families, to *govern*, as well as to *teach* their children, and how could they govern according to their best judgment and the dictates of their consciences, if the power was partly in other hands? In what other hands could it be safely placed? Would it do to bring in the children themselves as legislators, and leave it with them to decide what laws they would, or would not sanction, by their co-ordinate vote? Could

it be done by a general confederation of heads of families, within certain limits? Could parents make the laws, and then refer them for approval, to the legislative authorities of the state? I need not say a word to show, that either of these expedients would be ruinous. And then, if the administration of family government is not absolute and final, how can the authority of parents be sustained for an hour? The right of appeal supposes that there is some higher power to review and reverse their decisions. Where could such a power safely be lodged? What an anomaly would it be in human jurisprudence, to see children bringing their fathers and mothers by regular process before the tribunals! But I will not enlarge. In the very nature of the case, the parental prerogative must be supreme, or family government cannot be maintained. How it ought to be *exercised*, is quite another thing; and it is a question of vital importance, which I propose to consider in its proper place. But I feel well assured, that no other form of domestic government can ever succeed in the wide range of national rule, supreme power in the hands of one individual is not necessary—is not safe; but every man must rule his own house, according to his best light and judgment. His children must feel that he has a right to decide in *all cases*; and that his will is to govern, unless it plainly contravenes some paramount moral obligation, and thus encroaches upon the sacred rights of conscience.

CHAPTER III.

Family Government—How administered—Regard must be had to the children's age and temperament—Motives must be addressed to the heart—Corporeal punishment, sometimes necessary—Should be administered dispassionately and effectually.

It is one of the most important inquiries in the whole range of Domestic Education how family government should be administered.

Children must early be brought under absolute parental authority, and must submit to all the rules and regulations of the family during the whole period of their minority, and even longer, if they choose to remain at home. The master of a family who, from any cause fails to rule his own house, fails in one of the essential duties which he owes to God, and to the children whom God hath given him. Want of patience, want of wisdom, want of what is called *faculty*, does not excuse him. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth unto all men liberally, and upbraideth not."

But *how* is the great duty to be discharged? What are the means to be used—what the measures to be adopted and steadily pursued, for the attainment of the end? This is a branch of the subject, which I have merely glanced at. I have insisted, some will think too strenuously, perhaps, that the thing must be done—that children must be governed; but I have not yet pointed out the way. Perhaps I shall fail to answer the question wisely, in the remarks which I am

about to offer. They are my own thoughts, however, and they are not put forth hastily, however far short I may fall of doing justice to the subject.

My first remark is, *that in the government of children, regard should always be had to their age, constitutional temperament, and such other diversities, as often exist in the same family.* At first, you cannot reason with the restive little creature in your arms at all. It is too young to understand any of your appeals to its conscience, or its heart—but not too young to show a bad temper; and therefore not too young to be a subject of incipient discipline. Of course, it must be adapted to the infantile state and capacities of the child, or it will do no good, and may be positively injurious. There seems to be a kind of exquisite instinct imparted both to the mother and child, for this very purpose. By this instinct, she conveys her meaning in tones, and looks, and smiles, and frowns, to her darling boy, long before it is capable of understanding a single word that she utters. “As in water, face answereth to face,” so the heart of a mother to her babe; and in this way she begins to mold its temper and habits to her wishes. It is needless to say, that as soon as reason dawns, you should appeal to it in the government of your children, and avail yourself more and more of its aid, up to the full maturity of its development. Milk for babes, and strong meat for those who are old enough to digest it.

It will be strange, if, in studying the physical temperament and mental constitution of your children, you do not find some striking diversities, which it will require all your wisdom to guide into safe channels, and keep under proper control. One child needs a great deal more curbing than another. One must be

managed in this way, and another in that. *George* holds at once ; but *Stephen* holds out to the last. *John* is all docility and affection. While *Anna* is as wild as a young roe, and loves dearly to have her own way. *David* is constitutionally sedate, and early learns to govern his temper, and to submit cheerfully to parental authority ; but *William* is all mercury—his feelings are like a box of percussion caps, and though he may be neither sullen nor obstinate, it is extremely difficult to keep him under proper subjection. Hence the necessity of discrimination, promptitude and steadiness, on the part of the parent. Many fail here ; they will not take the trouble to study the characters of their children, and note down such differences as exist in almost every family ; but manage them all very much alike, and then marvel exceedingly, that what works like a charm upon one, has no effect at all upon another.

My next remark is, *that affectionate persuasion, addressed to the understanding, the conscience and the heart, is the grand instrument to be employed in family government.* Nobody has less confidence than I have, in the power of mere "moral suasion," to convert the soul to God. I should as soon expect it to raise the body of a dead man, as to change the heart of a living one. *Instrumentally*, it is of the highest importance, because God has appointed it ; but *efficiently*, it is nothing. The excellency of the power is not of it, but of *Him*. But in the administration of domestic government, I lay great stress upon the use of arguments, to show the reasonableness of filial obedience, and of high moral suasion, to enforce the duty. A child of four years old is better capable of being reasoned with than is generally imagined. To be sure, it is the in-

tellect of a child, and not of an adult, that you have to enlighten, and as a matter of course, you must come down to its level, both in thought and language. Were you to address it as you would a son of fifteen, your labor would all be lost; but there is a way to approach it; there is language which it can understand; there are reasons which it can begin to see and feel.

The minds of our children were made to be instructed in regard to their duty, and to be influenced by proper motives when clearly and properly presented. Our being clothed with patriarchal authority, does not authorize us to overlook this all-important susceptibility, and govern by mere will and force. So far from it, that I hold it to be the duty of every parent to explain the reasons of his requirements, as far and as fast as his children become capable of comprehending them. This should be his invariable rule from the early dawn of reason, up to its brightest youthful maturity. I know that where there is a large family, it requires a great deal of time and patience; much more than we know how to afford, to give a reason for everything; but though it may be very inconvenient, at first, there will be a clear saving of time in the end. With few exceptions, children soon learn cheerfully to acquiesce in the better judgment of their parents, when the grounds of that judgment are briefly or more fully stated, as occasion may require. A child that has been sick, calls for a particular kind of food, and thinks it very hard to be denied. Let him be told the reason why it cannot be given him. He has set his heart upon going out in a damp day, to see his little play-mates. His mother is sure it would not be safe, and let her convince him if she can. He is unwilling to go to school, or to church. Reason the matter with

him, and in this way try to overcome his reluctance, before you resort to more cogent arguments. Your son wants to go abroad with other boys in the neighborhood and feels as if he could not be denied. You cannot give your consent, because you are perfectly satisfied, that it would not be safe, either for his health, or his morals, and you might settle the question with a simple and decided negative. But this would not be wise. He wants to know the reason, and how can you spend a few moments to better advantage, than trying to satisfy him?

"Father," said a young man, to a patriarch of the mountains, who is still living, (after being told that he must not go with half a dozen idle fellows, who had come to invite him,) "Father, why is it that you always deny me those privileges which other parents grant so readily, to their sons of my own age?" "David," replied the father raising his head and leaning upon the top of his hoe handle, "I have lived much longer in the world than you have, and I see dangers, which you little suspect. These young men are in a bad way. Such habits of idleness as they are forming and this going about to frolics and horse races, will ruin them. You will see if you live, that some of them will get into the State's Prison by and by, and it is well if they do not come to the gallows. These are my reasons for wishing you to have nothing to do with them." David was satisfied. Years rolled away, Those young men soon spent their patrimony and fell into dissipated habits. From step to step they went on, till the prediction of the patriarch was literally fulfilled. Two or three of them were sent to the State's Prison, and one at least, was hanged.

While I strenuously insist on the duty of giving rea-

sons in the administration of family government, I am aware, there may be cases, in which from prudential motives they should be withheld, at least for a time. Your little son may wish to associate with the vicious children of his own age, in the next house; and while you cannot allow it, it may not be expedient to tell him why. So it is more than possible, that when the hearts of our children are greatly set upon any indulgence, they will not be convinced by any arguments which we can use, to dissuade them. In such cases, if our reasons are good, the fault is with them; and at any rate, we are to be the judges in the last resort not they. If I cannot convince my child, that the gratification of his desires would be injurious, or wrong, when I am sure it would, I must interpose my authority to restrain him. This I take to be the true ground, and the true distinction. But if parents were universally to make it a fixed principle, to "show cause," where it can be done, in the exercise of the authority with which God has clothed them, it would be communicating a vast amount of instruction to their children, on a thousand practical questions of the greatest moment, and would go very far towards securing the most prompt and cheerful obedience.

Before dismissing this topic, let me add, that there is a great advantage in administering family government, by the expression of our *wishes*, rather than by *positive commands*. The most obedient and affectionate children are those that have been accustomed from their cradle, to regard every wish of their mother, as a law of love, and rather to anticipate her desires, than to wait for any less gentle demonstration of her authority. Those who commonly talk low, and say, "I hope you will not do this," "or I shall be very happy in see-

ing you do that," are the most likely to rule their households well, provided they contrive to make it distinctly understood, that every wish they express has all the force of law, and must be so regarded.

Equally important is it, that parents should enlist the *consciences* of their children, to secure a ready and cheerful obedience. Indeed, till you reach the conscience, you have done but little to bind your child to his duty. He must be made not only to see *reasons*, but to feel the force of moral obligation. "You must do this because it is *right*, and you must not do that, because it is *wrong*." Such appeals, when solemnly and affectionately presented, are calculated to make a deep impression on the young mind. Conscience responds to them, and when properly enlightened, soon establishes her empire in the bosom of the child, so that he cannot be disobedient without a feeling of self-condemnation, which will act as a more powerful restraint, than the most positive requirements and prohibitions. *Command* your child, and if he sees you are in earnest, he will probably obey you. Show him the reason of the command, and he will yield more cheerfully. Appeal to his conscience, get that enlisted on your side, and you have a hold upon him which you never had before. You have gained an auxiliary, that will sometimes help you even when you are asleep yourself, and will often be more efficient when you are absent, than when you are present.

Having once gained the conscience of your child, his heart will yield as a matter of course; and this is incomparably the sweetest control, that a parent can ever establish in his family. Let him reign in the hearts of his children, that is, let their obedience be prompted by filial affection, and what can he wish for

age *several*, under all the disadvantages, arising from his bad example?

But perhaps your first-born is your *only* child; and if so, you will need to be especially on your guard against the undue ascendancy of those parental yearnings, which bind it so closely to your hearts. It is a common remark, founded on observation and experience, that an only son or daughter is in great danger of suffering by too much indulgence, if not of being spoiled; and quite certain I am, that it requires more self-denial to thwart the wishes and curb the temper of an only child, than it would if he were but one of a numerous family. If you do not watch and pray without ceasing, the dear little creature, upon whom your fondest hopes and affections are concentrated, will take undue liberties; and in one way or another, make dangerous encroachments upon that authority with which God has clothed you, and for the proper exercise of which he holds you accountable. Depend upon it, if you yield to the importunities of your son, or spare him when he does wrong, because you have but *one*, and cannot bear to deny or chastise him, he is getting the mastery of you, to your certain retribution for unfaithfulness, and probably to his own undoing. Say not then, he is my *all*, and therefore I cannot deny him; I cannot be severe in marking his faults; but rather say, that *as* he is my all, it becomes me to be the more exact and faithful in the discharge of all my parental duties.

Sixthly: *the rights and duties of parents, in this regard, extend through the whole period of the child's minority.* It is not enough for parents to bring their children early under proper subjection, and then leave their authority to take care of itself. There is no such

executive energy in any domestic code, however wise or reasonable. The work is only commenced, when you have subdued the refractory spirit of your child. It is indeed an auspicious beginning; and if you keep the advantage which you have gained, the task will ever after be comparatively easy. But you must never let go the reins. If you relax, if you leave the child after it has once yielded, to follow its own depraved inclinations, it will soon become as head-strong as ever; and if it does not get entirely beyond your reach, it may cost you infinite trouble to regain the ground which you have lost. All the natural tendencies in the minds of our children are downward; and there is no overcoming this gravitating power, but by constant effort. "Line must be upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little."

A judicious parent will not use exactly the same means to govern a boy of eight years old, as he does to govern a child of two; nor will he deal with a grown up son of fifteen, just as he does with a lad of ten. But though the *means* will be different, the *end* is the same. The young man of twenty, in his father's house, has no more right to say that he will use his own discretion, in regard to observing the rules and regulations of the family, than a child of ten; and that parent sins against God, against the community in which he lives, and against his own family, who throws up his authority, before his children can safely be left to govern and take care of themselves. What a heavenly example has Jesus Christ left, for the imitation of all children, down to the end of the world. When, after three days' anxious search, his parents "found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions,"

enough to understand the reason of it. To this opinion, after some experience and the maturest reflection, I cannot subscribe. I regard the question merely as a question of *fact*, and not as involving the accountable agency of the child at all. [How early *can* you begin to check its peevishness, and mold its temper to your wishes? If you can safely and with any advantage begin, when the infant is three or six months old, it is a point of no importance with me, how low it is found on the scale of moral agency. As God has nowhere told me, that I must wait till my child can reason and feel itself to blame for crying and showing a bad temper, before I attempt to lay it under any restraint, I consider myself authorized, nay, bound to take it in hand, just as soon as I can bend the twig in a right direction.

Without, therefore, pretending to fix upon the earliest week, or month, I do not hesitate to give it as my opinion, that considerable progress may be made under *six* months, if not under *four*; and that parental authority ought to be well established within the first year and a quarter. It has been done a thousand times, and why should it not be done a thousand more? The best governed children, and will the reader pardon me if I add, the only well governed children are those who are brought into complete subjection in the nursery; and most of them at so early a day, that they cannot remember when, half choked by their stubborn wills, they first lisped out, "*I won't*" to try the great question of mastery with their mothers, and were conquered. One thing every body must admit—children are capable of showing, plainly enough, to what race they belong, at a very tender age. It is astonishing to see how early the spirited little fellow will stiffen its body,

and throw back its head, and kick and strike, and put forth other demonstrations of its high displeasure : and who can doubt, that when these signs of depravity appear, it is time for the parent to enter on a course of counteraction and repression ?

Every nurse must have observed that infants begin to form habits, troublesome or otherwise, almost as soon as they begin to breathe. Lay them quietly down at first, and they will soon become accustomed to it, so as to relieve you of a great deal of care. Rock them to sleep a few times, and you must do it always. Carry them about the room for a single day in your arms, when they are uneasy, and they will find you exercise enough for the rest of the year. Now why should you not as early as possible take advantage of this extreme ductility, to mold them into all good habits, including the most important of all, a cheerful submission to your authority ? As it is easy to accustom children, before they are a year old, to go to bed alone in the dark, and exceedingly delightful to hear them cooing and talking themselves to sleep, so may they unquestionably be brought to yield implicitly to the look and the voice of a parent, at the tenderest age ; and when the habit is thus early formed, it saves infinite trouble to both.

Waiving entirely, for the present, the question whether the rod is ever to be used in the administration of family government, I remark in the

First place, that *this government should be uniform*. This is a point in which a great many worthy heads of families show their almost utter want of tact and good judgment ; and failing here, they succeed but poorly in all their efforts to establish and maintain the authority which God has made it their duty to

exercise, over their own households. There is no reason to doubt, that parents of this class love their children as tenderly as any other class; and it is certain, that many of them intend to be conscientious and faithful in the discharge of all their duties. Their theory of government may be perfectly correct, and they begin quite well, perhaps. They bring the child to terms, and make him feel that direct resistance to their will is hopeless and out of the question. But they do not carry an even hand. Now they are strict even to a fault, and anon they vibrate to the opposite extreme. What they forbid one day they allow the next. There is no certainty, no uniformity in their administration. Their own temperament is fitful. They are governed more by the east wind, than by a sober judgment. The child, if it does wrong, is in greater danger before dinner than after. He is punished, perhaps, too severely one hour, and stuffed with cake and sugar plums the next, to square the account.

Now such an administration will never succeed. Children must know what to depend upon. You must give them no reason to apprehend too great displeasure on the one hand, nor to hope for extreme lenity on the other. Having settled in your own minds what is right, what obedience your children owe you, and what authority it is your duty to exercise over them you must hold a steady rein. What you are and what you require to-day, you must be and must require to-morrow. Giving with one hand and taking with the other,—doing and undoing,—demanding all, and then yielding more than all, is worse than lost labor. No government can be efficient, whether civil or domestic, where there is a great want of uniformity and consistency in the administration.

Secondly: *family government should be strictly impartial.*

Nothing can be more destructive of domestic harmony than parental *favoritism*. So long as children of the same family differ essentially in their characters and dispositions, (and this is often the case,) so long as some are gentle, affectionate, and obedient, and others stubborn and unfilial, it is impossible for any parent to regard them alike; and if he could, it would only show his want of moral discrimination. He must approve and disapprove, reward and punish, with a strict regard to personal character. This is the great principle on which every good government is administered. So far as parental love consists in *complacency*, a father may certainly love a dutiful better than an undutiful son. Indeed, he cannot help it, and there is no partiality in this. But if he indulges one child more than another,—if he punishes John and lets James go free,—if he is blind to the faults of one and severe to mark those of another,—he is partial, and can never in this way govern his family well. His children will see and feel the wrong. If those who have reason to complain obey him, it will be from fear and not from affection; and he will be so far from securing the reverence and gratitude of his favorites, that they will be the first to despise his authority and “bring down his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.” If a perverse child will complain, because his privileges are abridged, and he is made to eat the bitter fruits of his own ways, there is no help for it. He might restore himself to the standing and affection which he has forfeited, if he would; and he has no more right to say, when he is punished and others are rewarded, that injustice is done him, than the thief has to complain, that he is

imprisoned while his honest neighbors are unmolested. But while this is true on the one hand, let every parent guard as much as possible against all appearance of partiality on the other; and the moment the prodigal returns, and says, "Father, I have sinned," let him be received with open arms, however far he may have wandered, and whatever grief he may have occasioned.

Thirdly : *family government requires unity of feeling, judgment and action.*

If parents are not of one heart and one mind, in regard to this matter, it will be found extremely difficult, if not impossible, to rule their household well. And how many families suffer from this want of unity! The father and mother, instead of "seeing eye to eye," and directing all their efforts to one point, differ essentially, both in theory and practice. As they do not think alike, they move in opposite directions. One parent, perhaps, is too stern, and the other too lax and indulgent. Or if one has correct views of parental authority, and the manner in which it should be exercised, the other looks at the whole subject in a very erroneous point of light. What one regards as a serious fault, the other overlooks as an excusable foible. Where one thinks the rod is called for, the other is entirely opposed to it. Where one is actuated by principle and good judgment, in the painful administration of necessary discipline, the other is swayed by a morbid tenderness, which would screen the little culprit, perhaps to his undoing.

I am aware that a perfect agreement in regard to the most judicious system of family government, cannot in all cases be expected. The father and mother may not be able, though they earnestly desire it, to think alike on this subject; nor, perhaps, upon some others,

of great practical moment. This is exceedingly to be regretted ; but although you may differ in *judgment*, you may sustain each other in *action*, and you must do it, or your authority is gone. What can the father do if the mother takes the part of the child ? Or what can the mother do, if the father comes in and takes the darling boy out of her hands ? Discuss these matters between yourselves as much as you please ; but never let your children know or suspect, that you are not perfectly agreed. A mother, will sometimes think that the father is too severe ; and let her convince him of it if she can, as soon as they are alone. A father, in his turn, will sometimes think the mother injudicious ; and let him do the same. But never let either interfere at the time. Suppose the most trying case that is likely to happen ; suppose the child to be punished a little beyond its demerits ; how trifling is the momentary suffering, compared with the mischief which would result from that kind of interference, of which I am here speaking ! Think alike, if possible. At all events, strengthen each other's hands, and never *seem* to differ. Let your children see, that in the administration of government, you are one,—that you have one heart and one aim,—and that nothing is to be hoped for, from any appeal that can be made to either. Take the opposite course ; let the jarring of interfering and conflicting action be felt, and your house being “divided against itself cannot stand.” Your own opinion may be, that you better know how to bend the twig than your wife, or your husband, as the case may be. If this be true, render thanks to God for giving you the talent, and make the most of it ; but never use it to weaken the authority of your com-

panion, who after all, will sometimes be nearer right, than yourself.

Fourthly: it is essential to a wise and efficient domestic administration, *that each parent should carry through any course of discipline that he or she undertakes, without any direct assistance from the other.* In almost every such case, either to offer aid or apply for it, weakens the authority which it is intended to strengthen. Whenever a father undertakes to subdue a perverse child, he must do it effectually, without looking anywhere but to God for help, and without accepting it, should it be ever so kindly offered. If the boy sees that he needs or receives any extraneous aid, his authority is weakened. In like manner, whenever the mother commands, she must be obeyed; and if there is any resistance, she must be left to overcome it by herself, especially in the nursery. The father may, perhaps, be convinced, that he could accomplish the object sooner than the mother, and may wish to relieve her from the painful struggle in which he sees her engaged, but it will never do. What she has begun, she must finish. The child must yield, and must yield to *her*, and not to somebody else. She may regret that she did not leave the task to stronger nerves; but there is no retreat; she must carry her point, or her authority will be despised. Every case of this sort, no doubt, ought to be well considered, and as far as practicable, agreed upon beforehand; and if an older child requires discipline, the father ought in most cases to undertake it. But the point on which I insist is, that what either parent actually undertakes, must be finished without any direct or obvious help from the other.

Fifthly: *that in the government of a family, every*

thing depends upon a good beginning. If you fail here, very faint is the prospect that you will ever succeed. If your *first* child is not well trained, and brought under entire subjection to your authority, you will find it extremely difficult to rule your household well afterwards. What can you do with the younger children, how can you expect they will reverence and obey you, when they have the example of headiness and insubordination in an older brother, constantly before their eyes? As "one sinner destroyeth much good" in a community, so does one ungoverned child in a family; and above all, if he be the *eldest*. It would be next to a miracle, if his example did not prove a permanent source of contagion.

On the other hand, if you succeed happily in the management of your first-born; if he is docile, obedient and affectionate from the cradle, he will help you exceedingly, by the influence of his example upon the minds, tempers and habits of his younger brothers and sisters. The principle or instinct of imitation, as every one knows, is much stronger in early childhood than at any other period of life; and nowhere is it so strong as in the domestic circle. It is the electrical wire, which the eldest holds in his hand, and by which he communicates the spark to all the rest at pleasure. If, by the blessing of God, you succeed well in your first endeavors; if the early establishment of your authority is unquestionable and unquestioned by your own fire-side, the prospect is fair, that with comparatively little trouble, you will secure the cheerful obedience of all your children; but if you stumble at the threshold, you can scarcely expect ever to recover from the shock. If you cannot mold the temper and habits of *one* child to your wishes, how can you man-

age *several*, under all the disadvantages, arising from his bad example?

But perhaps your first-born is your *only* child; and if so, you will need to be especially on your guard against the undue ascendancy of those parental yearnings, which bind it so closely to your hearts. It is a common remark, founded on observation and experience, that an only son or daughter is in great danger of suffering by too much indulgence, if not of being spoiled; and quite certain I am, that it requires more self-denial to thwart the wishes and curb the temper of an only child, than it would if he were but one of a numerous family. If you do not watch and pray without ceasing, the dear little creature, upon whom your fondest hopes and affections are concentrated, will take undue liberties; and in one way or another, make dangerous encroachments upon that authority with which God has clothed you, and for the proper exercise of which he holds you accountable. Depend upon it, if you yield to the importunities of your son, or spare him when he does wrong, because you have but *one*, and cannot bear to deny or chastise him, he is getting the mastery of you, to your certain retribution for unfaithfulness, and probably to his own undoing. Say not then, he is my *all*, and therefore I cannot deny him; I cannot be severe in marking his faults; but rather say, that *as* he is my all, it becomes me to be the more exact and faithful in the discharge of all my parental duties.

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executive energy in any domestic code, however wise or reasonable. The work is only commenced, when you have subdued the refractory spirit of your child. It is indeed an auspicious beginning; and if you keep the advantage which you have gained, the task will ever after be comparatively easy. But you must never let go the reins. If you relax, if you leave the child after it has once yielded, to follow its own depraved inclinations, it will soon become as head-strong as ever; and if it does not get entirely beyond your reach, it may cost you infinite trouble to regain the ground which you have lost. All the natural tendencies in the minds of our children are downward; and there is no overcoming this gravitating power, but by constant effort. "Line must be upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little."

A judicious parent will not use exactly the same means to govern a boy of eight years old, as he does to govern a child of two; nor will he deal with a grown up son of fifteen, just as he does with a lad of ten. But though the *means* will be different, the *end* is the same. The young man of twenty, in his father's house, has no more right to say that he will use his own discretion, in regard to observing the rules and regulations of the family, than a child of ten; and that parent sins against God, against the community in which he lives, and against his own family, who throws up his authority, before his children can safely be left to govern and take care of themselves. What a heavenly example has Jesus Christ left, for the imitation of all children, down to the end of the world. When, after three days' anxious search, his parents "found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions,"

rod at all, even in the worst cases, than to use it in a passion. Thousands have been hardened by such corrections, where one has been reformed. But on the other hand, I cannot advise a parent to wait till the proper occasion has passed by, with the intention of discharging the painful duty at another time; for if he does, he will probably find some excuse or other, for not discharging it at all.

Thirdly. Whenever you are driven to the dernier resort, take time to administer the punishment *deliberately and effectually*, whatever else may be neglected. The effect depends much less upon the number and heaviness of the blows, than upon the manner in which they are inflicted. I once knew a mother delay her tea nearly an hour, to bring a little spirited black hair to terms, when he had taken a knife from the table and refused to give it up. It required more use of the switch than she had any thought of when she began; but the strokes were light and far between. When he did surrender, it was at discretion; and his mother never had to go over the same ground with him again. If your child is older, and you feel bound to correct him for some serious fault, take him into a room alone, where you can have opportunity to set his sin before him in its true colors, and convince him, that painful as the duty is, God has enjoined it upon you, and you cannot neglect it, without incurring his displeasure. Let him see too, from your countenance and from the tones of your voice, that every stroke costs you more pain than it does him; and he must be perverse indeed, if he does not yield and reform. Very rarely, I believe, should even as light corporeal chastisement be finished and the child dismissed in less than a quarter of an hour; and in many cases, much more time is requisite to produce the desired effect.

CHAPTER IV.

Physical Education—Its importance—Creeping—Active sports in the open air—Other essential processes.

ALTHOUGH the young *mind* is that priceless gem which it should be a parent's supreme care to polish, the *casket* must not be overlooked, nor neglected. Dust though it be, and though to dust it will certainly return, the body as well as the soul is of Divine workmanship, and it is "fearfully and wonderfully made." The immortal spirit cannot exist and act in this world, without the body; and all experience proves, how essential a sound and healthy body is, to vigorous mental action. The puny and sickly child cannot start on even terms with one of high health, in the race of intellectual improvement. His mind will sympathize with the morbid feebleness of his physical system, and thus be clogged in all its movements; or if its precocious energy triumphs over every corporeal obstruction, it must be at the imminent hazard of early dissolution. A shop firmly built, with heavy and solid materials, will suffer but little from the jar of powerful machinery within; but if the framework be slender and uncompact, it will soon be shaken down.

In giving utterance to my thoughts on early physical education, I do not deem it quite prudent or safe, to pry too narrowly into the mysteries of infant swathing and ablutions, lest I should incur the rebukes of that ex-

cellent and useful class of persons, who preside over these mysteries. "What can you know about nursery affairs? You had better see to the older boys, whose education you have undertaken to superintend, and leave these little matters with us." Well, as I should be extremely sorry to be considered officious, I will touch lightly on this part of the subject. But I must be permitted to say, that in my poor judgment, the subsequent health and vigor of children depend very essentially upon the hands into which they happen to fall during the first months of their existence. Making all proper allowance for that extreme delicacy of constitution in some infants, which requires the tenderest nursing and forbids the least exposure, I am convinced that they are generally, except in very poor families, kept too much from the air, especially in fine weather. The impression seems to be, that they cannot bear the breath of the softest zephyr, till several weeks or months have gradually inured them to exposures. But how can they ever become inured to exposures, wrapped up in flannel and in a close room? If the physician advises to it, I have nothing to say, but this—they certainly manage differently in our "Fatherland," and their little ones appear much more healthy than ours. In regard to daily ablutions in cold water, I happen to know, that a little fellow in his mother's arms may become so accustomed to it, in a short time, as to enjoy the sponge mightily.

It used to be said, that every child must creep before it can walk; and it is true, to the letter, where nature is left to her own teaching. But if I am not mistaken, the good mothers of America are more and more inclined to take this branch of physical education entirely out of her hands. They seem to think, (they will par-

don me if I have not hit upon the true reason;) but they *seem* to think, that creeping is altogether too vulgar an affair, to be tolerated in good society; and so, till the poor child can walk like other folks, it must not move at all. Now I must protest against this abridgment of the "natural and inalienable rights" of childhood, even though half the Faculty should be against me. I dare say, that Benjamin Franklin and George Washington, were both great creepers in their infancy; and if I was a child, I would never give up the right of creeping, if I could help it. It is exactly what every child wants for health and amusement. It elevates the head, throws back the shoulders, and expands the chest, just at the time when the bones are so cartilaginous and elastic, as to take any shape you wish to give them. And what greater pleasure can there be, in a parent's leisure moments, than to see a healthy and active child going through with its infantile gambols, upon its hands and feet, with all the glee and sportiveness of a young kitten? I am aware, that in these times, there is one great objection to my doctrine; and when a mother asks me, who is to wash so many slips and bibs for my favorite young creeper, I am brought to a dead stand. The factories have voraciously swallowed up all that class of *helps*, as I believe Mrs. Trollope would call them; but *helps* or no *helps*, I would still let him creep on to his heart's content.

When children become older, nature prompts them to more vigorous action, and you must let your boys, and your girls too, have some such range as lambs enjoy in a bright May morning, or just in the soft evening twilight, if you wish to see them blooming and chubby. I know all this frolic, and sliding down hill, and *conjuring*, (as some of our good Saxon mothers

used to call it,) about the house and barn and lots, makes a plenty of work for the seamstress; and the laughing little cherry cheeks may think that their aprons and frocks *tore themselves*; but we can scarcely enjoy any advantage in this world, without some drawback. Certainly, children ought to be checked and restrained, when they go too far. They should be kept under as perfect control, all the while, as a well bitted colt. But they were born to run and laugh and breathe the fresh air and bound over the hills, as well as to work and study and sit up perpendicularly by their grand-mother's rocking-chairs: and although, from what I said in the last chapter, they might naturally enough expect me to be after them with the witch-hazle, I love them so dearly, that if they will keep any where within bounds, they need be under no serious apprehension.

In discussing the subject of domestic physical education, it will save me some trouble, if I may be allowed, for once, to quote from myself; an authority of which a writer is likely to have quite as good an opinion as any body else.

"That is undoubtedly the wisest and best regimen, which takes the infant from his cradle, and conducts him along through childhood and youth, up to maturity, in such a manner as to give strength to his arm, swiftness to his feet, solidity to his muscles, symmetry to his frame, and alacrity to all his vital functions. It is obvious that this branch of education comprehends not only food and clothing, but air, exercise, lodging, early rising, and whatever else may contribute to the full development of the physical system.

"If, then, you would see the son of your prayers and hopes, blooming with health, and rejoicing daily in the

sparkling tide of youthful buoyancy ; if you would make him strong and athletic and careless of fatigue ; if you would fit him for hard labor and safe exposure in winter and summer ; or if you would prepare him to sit down twelve hours a day, over Euclid, Enfield, or Newton, and still preserve his health, you must lay the foundation accordingly. Beware of too much restraint in the management of your darling boy. Never suffer yourself to be discomposed by his snow-forts in February, nor by his mud dams in April, nor by his sporting along with the water-fowl in an August shower. If you would make him hardy and enterprising, let him go abroad with perfect freedom, in his early boyhood, and amuse himself by the hour together, on the ice and in the snow-drifts. Instead of keeping him shut up all day, and graduating his sleeping room by Fahrenheit, let him face the keen edge of the north wind, when the mercury is below cypher, and instead of minding a little shivering when he returns, applaud his resolution and send him out again. I love the youth, who turns not back from the howling wintry blast, nor withers under the blaze of summer ; who never magnifies 'mole hills into mountains,' but whose daring eye scales the eagle's highest crag, and who is ready to undertake anything that is lawful, within the range of possibility.

“ Who would think of planting the 'royal' oak in a green house, or of rearing the cedar of Lebanon in a lady's flower pot ? Who does not know, that to attain their mighty growth and majestic forms, they must freely enjoy the rain and the sunshine, and must feel the racking of the tempest ? Who would think of nurturing up a band of Indian warriors upon cakes and jellies, and amid all the other luxuries of wealth and

carefulness? The attempt would be highly preposterous, not to say supremely ridiculous. It is the plain and scanty fare of these sons of the forest—their hard and cold lodging—their long marches and fastings—and their constant exposure to all the hardships of the wilderness, which give them their Herculean limbs and stature—their prodigious might in the deadly fray, and their eagle swiftness in pursuing the vanquished.

“I am far from supposing that such training would give to every child the arm of Achilles, or the courage of Logan, or the constitution and daring of Martin Luther. But there is certainly a mistaken tenderness, which daily interferes with the health giving economy of heaven. Too many parents, instead of building upon the foundation which God has laid, first subvert that foundation by overweening indulgence, and then vainly attempt to build upon the ruins. They so cross and perplex nature, in her endeavors to make their children strong and healthy, that she at length refuses to do anything for them, and the doting and misguided parents are left to brace and patch up the shattered and puny constitution as well as they can with tonics and essences. In this way, not a few young persons of good talents are rendered physically incapable of pursuing their studies to any advantage. They can never bear the fatigue of long and close application. The mind would gladly work, but the ‘earthly tabernacle’ is so extremely frail, that every vigorous effort shakes it to the foundation. It is like attempting to raise the steam for a large ship, in a tin boiler. Whatever talents a youth may be blessed with, he can accomplish but little, without a good constitution; and such a constitution, like almost every other gift of heaven, is to

'be obtained by the use of means adapted to the end. How many, who are extremely promising in childhood, ultimately wilt down and die, for want of skill and care in their early physical training !"

I dare say these speculations will seem quite too stern to some of my readers. In summer, it will spoil the complexion of the dear little sylph, to be basking about like a gipsy in the hot sun ; and in winter, how can a tender mother let her children run out in a sharp crystal morning, to come in crying with aching feet and icicle-fingers ? " And would you send your cleverest boy off to skate two hours without ear-laps or a striped woollen tippet, when the clear air is full of frost-flakes, and his breath smokes like the spout of a tea-kettle ?" Certainly I would ; and if his ears should be rather too white, when the sport is over, why just apply a snow-ball and restore them to their natural ruddiness. Who wants to bring up a boy, to be afraid of a shower of moonshine ? And how much more beautiful, in a young girl, is the rosy cheek and the full form which the fresh air gives, and gleeful exercise earns, than the white face and delicate outline, which so many misses, on the nether side of their teens, are taught to pine for !

But important as this topic is, I do not feel authorized to tax the reader any further ; though I have " thoughts " enough left, as I *flatter* myself, for one or two forms of small pica. Many have written, and are writing, I dare say, much more fully on early physical education ; and I hope every head of a rising family will read and think much on the subject. Every day is precious. If a right course of physical training be early adopted and judiciously persevered in, the good effects will be gradually developed ; and where there

is a healthy natural constitution, a broad foundation will be laid for a noble intellectual structure. But if, on the other hand, this essential branch of early education is neglected, or badly conducted, the enervating and disastrous effects will be seen and felt, when it is too late to remedy the evil.

CHAPTER V.

Wide field of inquiry—Social, intellectual, and moral training closely connected—Infancy not to be tasked, but watched, guided and held in check—Precocious mental developments extremely injurious—Earlier culture of the social and moral faculties—Great and almost spontaneous acquisitions during this period—Proper studies of childhood.

THOUGH I have no pledges to redeem because I have given none, I frankly confess, that the further I advance, the more difficult do I find it to satisfy myself, in regard to the selection of topics, and the best manner of treating them. "What should be attempted, and what entirely let alone? Of the topics chosen, which should be more fully and which more briefly discussed? What regard should be had to logical and philosophical arrangement? How much time ought to be spent in unfolding general principles, and how much space should be devoted to every day practical illustrations?" These are questions, which bring along with them their several doubts and misgivings. Were there time to explore the whole field, I might perhaps, with the help of skillful guides, find my way over it, and take the bearings and relations of things, without committing any very palpable mistakes. If the object were to compose a full and regular treatise on domestic education, I should know at least what to *attempt*. And as it is, were my thoughts a good deal maturer than they are, I could certainly throw them out in any

way, whether in broken fragments or in continuity, to much better advantage. But I have concluded not to perplex my mind further with unavailing regrets, that I have not more time and space and ability to do justice to the subject. Let me rather make the best use of what I have, and leave the rest to abler and more leisurely pens.

Happily for me, the social, intellectual, and moral training of children is so closely connected throughout, and so intimately blended in many important respects, that no special pains need be taken to handle the topics separately, according to any natural or philosophical arrangement. From a very tender age, these several branches of education, to be prosecuted with the highest success, by the domestic fire-side, must be carried on together.

- Here is the most helpless little being in the world, brought and put into your arms; and what will you do with it? Parental affection craves no time to answer—"It shall find a home in my bosom, and be cherished as the apple of my eye. I will nurse it with all the tenderness which its extreme delicacy and helplessness require. If it is sick, I will watch over it day and night, and do everything in my power to alleviate its sufferings; and if it dies, I will embalm all its loveliness in my heart." But if its life is spared, what will you do to train it up for happiness, for usefulness, and for heaven? The physical part of early education I have spoken of already, and on this topic I have nothing at present to add. I have reminded you, also, that this child is to be put under your absolute control, during the whole period of its minority—a control which you cannot decline to exercise, if you would, and with which no earthly power has a right to interfere.

Here, then, is this little unconscious stranger, not only to be fed and clothed and sheltered, but to be educated for high earthly destinies and for an immortal crown. God has created it for noble purposes, and endowed it with various faculties. It is just waking into an endless life. Its destiny is onward. It will rise and shine and sing with cherubim and seraphim, or sink and wail with the outcast and the lost, forever and ever. Here it is, as it came from the hand of the Creator. It is committed to you, and not to your neighbor. The question is not whether you will accept the charge, or decline it—whether you will educate the child, or leave it to grow up in ignorance and vice. No such option is proffered. The most important duties of life are not thus to be got rid of. You have nothing to do in giving it new faculties, or in supplying any which may be wanting. Your business is to watch for the development of those with which God has endowed it, and to cultivate them with untiring assiduity. I say, to *watch* for their development, and not to *force* it—not even to *hasten* it. Nature does these things infinitely safer and better than we can. God could no doubt bring human beings into the world, from generation to generation, in the full maturity of their powers. But this is not his economy, in the world which we inhabit. Everything that is endowed with life, must have time to expand and grow. In the vegetable kingdom, there is “first the blade, then the ear, and after that, the full corn in the ear.” Give the germ, which has now but a single leaf, rain and sunshine, and your great grand-children may see it tossing its giant arms in defiance of the tempest; but you cannot force it up to this sublime conflict in half a dozen years. Drop a single seed upon the side of a moun-

tain, and a century hence it will have become a Norwegian pine, fit for some "tall admiral;" but how vain would every attempt be to hasten its growth on its native soil; and who would be so foolish as to transplant it to a tropical climate, with the design of making a mast of it a few years sooner?

So in the animal kingdom, we everywhere see the footsteps of progression. The young alligator is as defenceless and harmless as a minnow. There is nothing in the little tiger, at first, to repel the caresses of a child; and even the African lion is no lion at all, except in the elements of its nature, till a considerable time has elapsed, for the development of its strength and ferocity.

These analogies are highly instructive, when brought to bear upon the slow and gradual unfolding of the infant mind; although it would be extremely obvious to every careful observer without them, that but little can be safely done in the way of direct intellectual culture, within the first four or five years. Such is the common anxiety of parents, especially of young parents, to catch the first dawn of intelligence in their offspring, and to reflect it upon all their admiring friends, that there is vastly more danger from premature development, than from want of early stimulus. If you divide the life of your child into three periods, as some writers have done, calling the first *infancy*, till the fifth or sixth year—the second, *childhood*, till the eleventh or twelfth—and the third, *youth*, till the eighteenth or twentieth, the less you attempt in the way of direct instruction during the first period, the better. Let the infant, I mean the child, under five or six years, sleep just as much as nature requires. Let it play, till nature calls for repose. Stand by, as a watchful guardian, to

protect it from all hurtful extraneous influences ; but within its own little sphere, let it move with perfect freedom, under the sweet attractions of your eye and your voice. Think how extremely tender the brain is, and neither task it yourselves, nor allow any body else to excite it, to undue action. Make the infant as happy, if you can, as the day is long ; or rather, I should say, give it air, give it room and liberty to try its limbs and organs—give it playthings enough, (the ruder the better, perhaps,) and from two to five years old, it will be happy as a matter of course. *Enjoyment* is the very element in which little children, in a subordinate sense, “live and move and have their being.” They will, sometimes cry for a moment, to be sure ; as when kitty asserts its inalienable right to its own ears, or puss resents too much meddling with her tail ; but it is only like the flitting of a cloud across the sun’s disc. It is gone, before we have time to notice it. Who ever saw a group of small children unhappy for the space of five minutes, whether in town or country—whether in the park or the gutter—whether rich, or poor, clad, or unclad ? I am sure, that although I have noticed them a thousand times, and in almost all possible situations, at home and abroad,—upon the lawn of the stately mansion and in the little clay pits around the log house—in fellowship with the swine in Irish cabins, and basking in filth and tatters in the darkest lanes of London and Paris, I cannot recollect a single instance in which they did not appear to enjoy themselves.

This, I am satisfied, is nature’s grand design, during the first years of life, to diffuse happiness throughout the whole world of little beings, upon whom so many cares and labors and sorrows are ultimately to devolve. They were made to grow and prattle and sport, while

their mental powers are spontaneously expanding ; and not to think or be tasked, especially where they manifest the least reluctance to fix their attention upon the simplest rudiments of learning ; for this reluctance is a voice of high authority, telling us that the time has not yet come.

It is not less interesting than it is sometimes amusing, to observe how many things young house-keepers intend to do in better style than their fathers and mothers did before them. They may find, to be sure, some ten or twenty years hence, that they were quite too sanguine, even where they were most confident ; but it is better to err on this hand than the other. " I would not give a copper " for a young couple, just setting out in life, who do not intend to show their friends, how *well* some things can be done ; for if they aim not at a higher mark than is ordinarily reached, they will be almost certain to fall below mediocrity. There is a very common mistake, however, in regard to infant education, which ought to be guarded against, as extremely injurious in its ultimate effects. The prevailing notion is, that the earlier you can learn a child to read, the better. Parents want to ascertain before the third year, whether they have not a genius to educate, which appears to them extremely probable, and if so, they wish to be about it. Who knows but that the dear little creeper is a Newton or a Pascal in miniature ? And what a pity, that its mind should be left to slumber a year or two longer, when it might so easily be waked up at once, to enter upon its high career of improvement !

In this view of the subject, it is obvious how difficult a task it must be, to persuade parents to let their sprightly little darling alone, till the rain and the sunshine

have opened the bud and prepared the way for mental culture. Had some older friend said to us, some four and twenty years ago, when we were arranging our lettered blocks, and showing our Reuben or Simeon, that h-a-t spells hat, "You are quite too early for the advantage and safety of your child, you had better leave the little fellow to his cob-houses and his antics till nature has had time to do her part," I dare say we should have gone on, without giving much heed to the advice, believing it to be a loss of precious time to withhold instruction a single week, after the child is capable of receiving it. But the common idea, that if you can teach an infant to read with considerable ease and propriety in its third or fourth year, it is, as a matter of course, so much clear gain, is extremely fallacious. It is not at all certain that the boy will be more forward at *twelve*, than he would have been, had you postponed teaching him the alphabet two years longer; or than another boy will be, who could not read a word at *five*. It will be found, that as a general rule, there is a freshness and a vigor in the minds of late-taught children, which you do not find after a precocious and hard-tasked infancy. Most certainly, where the child is uncommonly forward, inquisitive and teachable, repression, rather than excitement, is called for; and even where it is dull and backward, no time is lost, in waiting patiently for the unfolding of its powers. The growth of some minds, like that of some plants, is very slow. Were I to find a child, of fair promise in other respects, disinclined to give its attention to the simplest rudiments of learning, even up to the age of six or seven, I should by no means despair of seeing him a fine scholar at twenty, and a distinguished professor at forty.

In fine, I am strongly impressed with the belief, that if the experiment could be fairly tried upon a great scale, those infants that are rightly managed in other respects, but do not know a letter till they are five years old, would ultimately surpass, both in strength and acquirements, such as begin their studies two or three years earlier. I have no doubt, that ten of the latter class are seriously injured, both in body and mind, by taxing the brain too early, where one of the former suffers in his education by not commencing early enough. I agree, however, with the profound author of "Home Education," that the danger lies, not so much in the mental effort which it costs an infant of early promise to *learn* to read, as in the taste for reading, which is likely to be prematurely developed, and to be whetted into a morbid appetite. It is this eager poring over story books at so tender an age, that retards the growth, and robs the little cheek of its fulness and its color. And who has not observed how difficult it is to restrain an infant, and keep it within the bounds of safety, when once its craving for intellectual stimulants has gained the ascendancy over its interest in the play and prattle to which nature prompts it? So much complacency are parents apt to feel in their darling little prodigies, and so flattering is it to have friends and strangers admire their skill and success in this hot-bed culture, that it requires more than an ordinary share of firmness and intelligence, to resist the temptation of showing off a smart child of three or four years in his well-thumbed primer, and to hold him in check, while other parents are urging on their nonpareils to leave him entirely in the back ground. The less the pressure, however, at this tender age, the better and safer for the child.

"Is there nothing, then, for us to do, during the first five or six years," you will ask, "but to feed and clothe our children, and make them as vigorous and healthy little animals as possible?" Certainly there is a great deal that you can do to mold their social and moral characters, and to imbue their minds with instruction in its simplest and most attractive forms. Children give indubitable proofs, in very early infancy, that they are social beings. They take great pleasure in seeing and playing with other children. They love those who take care of them, and show an interest as well in their little troubles, as in their infantile gambols. It is astonishing how soon they learn to distinguish all the kindly emotions, in the countenances of parents and brothers and sisters. But it does not follow, because God has given them a social nature, which begins to develop itself almost as soon as they are born, that it will put on the most lovely forms without early cultivation. It is in the nursery, as in your gardens.—Weeds will spring up fast enough, without a drop from your brow to water them; but no useful plant will grow without care and culture. The social affections, in like manner, will begin to turn sour in the infant's bosom astonishingly early, if they are not guided into the right channels, and made to circulate freely. As love begets love, in all the subsequent periods of life, so it is in the first period. Allowing, as we must, that some children are naturally more gentle and affectionate than others, still the most kindly developments need to be watched and cherished, while those that are tardy and unkindly, call for unwearied assiduity. The infant mind is a highly polished mirror, reflecting the image of every smile and every frown—of every tender and every ill-natured emotion, with perfect exactness.

Let a child enjoy the caresses of the whole family, during the tenderest period of its existence ; let it hear none but the soft voices of affection, and behold nothing but love and good will in every countenance ; let the corresponding emotions in its little heart be always cherished, and the opposite feelings always repressed, and who can doubt that very important advances might be made in its social education, long before its mind can be tasked with regular lessons ?

The *moral faculty* is also very early developed—much earlier than you can teach your child letters, either with advantage or safety. As soon as the infant can be made to understand what its mother approves and disapproves, it is a proper subject of moral influence. This influence will, of course, be very feeble at first ; but it will, if judiciously employed, gain strength every day. The child will *begin* to perceive the difference between right and wrong, in many cases before the end of the second year, and always before the end of the third—I mean, if its parents do their duty. In a year or two more, the distinction will become so clear that they will be able to apply it in a thousand practical forms, as the cases of right and wrong daily occur ; and by carrying a judicious and steady hand, very considerable progress may be made in this branch of education, before one letter of the alphabet can be distinguished from another. Indeed, though it may seem quite visionary, I am strongly inclined to believe that infants have a kind of moral instinct, which stands in the place of reason, and which is nothing less than the “law of the Lord,” “written upon their hearts,”—in other words, that there is an innate feeling of moral distinctions, which invites congenial culture, almost from the birth, and which is very early blunted by ad-

verse influences, both internal and external. If so, here is an additional motive for the early commencement of moral education.

Nor, if I am right in wishing to give the infant's brain a year or two more for development than is commonly allowed, before any traces of letters are drawn upon it, does it follow at all that no kind of intellectual culture should be attempted. On the contrary, there is probably no period of life when it can be used to better advantage. Few are aware how much is to be done and to be learned, before we come to the A B C. What I am now going to suggest, will provoke a smile, I dare say ; but though I can hardly agree with Dr. Thomas Brown, that if we could remember the thoughts of our infancy, they would probably throw more light upon intellectual philosophy than all we can derive from other sources, I strongly suspect, that the mind is never more active than it is from the third to the fifth or sixth year. An infant's world of thought, compared with that of a well-educated adult, must of course be very small ; but still its mind may be just as busy, as if its range were a thousand times wider. So spontaneous is muscular action in young children, that the common remark is, "they are never still from morning to night." And why may not their minds illustrate perpetual motion, as well as their bodies ? It is true that the latter come under the cognizance of our senses, and the former do not. But look at the infant in its mother's arms, when its eye is immovably fixed upon the blaze of a candle ; or when, a little older, it springs, as if it would leap out of its skin, to catch the beautiful object. Is its little mind asleep, or is it as wide awake and as active as that of the father who is tossing it ? Who has not a hundred times noticed how exceedingly busy in-

infants will make themselves with their toys, and broken crockery, and sand heaps, and mud ovens; and how they will talk to themselves by the hour together, with as much apparent interest and pleasure, as their parents feel in pursuing any of their graver avocations; and are they all this while thinking of nothing, learning nothing? Do they ever acquire knowledge faster?

Consider what the infant has to learn, and actually does learn, in four or five years, without any apparent efforts, or the least detriment to its growth or health. It learns to see,—that is, to measure magnitudes and distances with its eye; which, even in an adult, would require a long course of experience. It learns to hear,—that is, to judge of the direction from which sound comes, and of distances too, with surprising facility. It learns the size and shape of a thousand objects by handling them. It learns to distinguish the countenances and voices of all persons whom it sees often, however large the number. It learns the name and uses of almost everything that falls under its observation. It will learn two or three languages, (provided it daily hears them spoken,) so as to distinguish person, number, gender and case; the present, past and future tenses, and the meaning of many thousand words. It will learn to converse in them all, in short, simple sentences, with considerable ease and propriety, as it respects articulation, cadence, accent, emphasis, and the like. And while it is spontaneously treasuring up this mass of useful knowledge, you can teach it a great variety of other things, such as hymns, prayers, catechisms, and scraps of sacred history, with even more success than if it was at the same time learning nothing else. Surely, then, every parent can find enough to do in furthering the education of his children, without

teaching them letters before they are old enough to profit by it; and he must be a very unreasonable father, who is not satisfied with the surprising acquisitions which they make during the period of their infancy.

The first and tenderest period of life has now closed. Your child is no longer an infant, lying helpless in your arms, shaking its rattle, tottering by your side, or lisping its little troubles and wants into your ready ear. Hitherto your duties and cares have been confined chiefly to its physical wants, and to giving a right direction to the earliest germinations of its social and moral nature. You have been trying to see what a fine, healthy little model of perpetual motion you could make it—have been protecting and encouraging it in its infantine amusements, and waiting patiently for the development of its intellectual faculties, so that you might commence a systematic course of instruction. Your darling Joseph, now in his fifth or sixth year, cannot read a line perhaps, in the first lessons, because you have been in no hurry to bring him forward; but he is as fat and ruddy and full of glee, and has as bright an eye and as high a forehead as any other Joseph or Benjamin of his age in the neighborhood. Saving O, and crooked S, and T with a hat on, he can hardly distinguish one letter from another; but he has been learning to creep, and to go alone, and to run—to see and hear and talk. In other words, he has, in his own way, been learning to find the center of gravity, and studying physiognomy, and grammar, and heights and distances, and spherics, and natural history, and a hundred other things, which I cannot stop to enumerate, but which are quite as important as “Ba-ker,” or “When the sky falls we shall catch larks.” He has

been taking lessons from *nature*, the most winning and skillful teacher in the world, and preparing to take up *books*, when the proper time should come.

That time has now arrived. The key may safely be put into his hand, with which he is to unlock the treasures of human wisdom and knowledge. And how long will it take a child of six years old, whose mind has always been kept active, to learn the alphabet? Not a week—in many instances not more than one or two days; and in a month it would not be strange to hear him reading the first chapter of John's Gospel. How many years, then, will he be, in overtaking those pale and flabby victims of precocity, who could read the New Testament at the age of three; and who, for what they have since gained, under high mental pressure, have lost an inch or two a-piece, in the lateral dimensions of the *os frontis*? Give me the boy, whose accumulating energies, in the enjoyment of high health, have been well husbanded till they can be put forth without endangering the delicate machinery with which the mind works. It is surprising to see what proficiency a child that comes fresh to his books, at the age of six or seven, will make in various studies, such as reading, writing, grammar, history, geography, &c., before he is twelve.

Let it not be supposed, however, that you can safely subject your child to long protracted mental efforts, such as at adult age he may find himself able to endure without injury or inconvenience. There are studies which are quite beyond the age of which I am now speaking, which some children can grapple with for a little while, and even master, perhaps; but if they do, it is at the greatest hazard and expense of nervous and vital energy. Nothing pains me more than to see an

ambitious and promising boy pouring over quadratic equations, or the more difficult parts of geometry. While I cannot help admiring his promptitude in going through with a difficult demonstration, I feel confident that the poor child is tasked beyond his strength, and that he will one day have to pay back what he is borrowing, with enormous, if not absolutely ruinous interest. I bring these remarks under the head of domestic education, because parents in some cases keep their children during this period under their own private tuition; and because, in all cases, they are bound to keep a watchful superintendence over their early education. They may neither urge them on too fast themselves, nor allow other teachers to do it.

The common branches of popular education—reading, writing, spelling, and arithmetic, with a smattering of grammar and geography, may be gone over without encroaching much upon the teens; but if you intend to make your son or your daughter a proficient in liberal studies, you must wait for higher intellectual maturity. Nature, if I may so express it, develops all the physical and mental faculties *as fast as she can*. If you attempt to force her, she resents it, and though she may be unable to protect her young charge against your impatient interference, she will be sure to give you reason to regret your temerity, sooner or later.

I am quite aware, that admitting the general correctness of the remarks which I have just made, much room will be left for the exercise of parental discretion. Children differ so much in natural talents, and in the earlier or later developments of their physical and intellectual constitutions, as well as in their future destinations, that no general rule will apply to all cases. Some may be taught to read a year or two sooner than

others, with safety and advantage ; and the same may be said of arithmetic, geography, and indeed, of all other branches of study. It would be wrong, on the one hand, to try to force a late and dull boy to keep up with one of an early growth and bright parts ; or on the other, to hold the latter in check, to suit the tardy advancement of the former. And in making out a course of juvenile studies, a good deal must depend upon the pecuniary circumstances of parents, and the business or profession for which their children are to be educated. If a boy must go to a trade, or on to a farm, or into a counting-house, at the age of twelve or fourteen, it is necessary he should be urged on faster, than if he were to be educated for the bar or the pulpit, and to spend some ten years longer in classical and professional studies. But in no case is anything gained, in the long run, by taxing the brain too early, or too heavily. Your child must be allowed to remain a child, till winters and summers, correctly counted, have prepared him for more vigorous and longer continued intellectual efforts. If you force him up to the attainments of manhood, or allow him to force himself up, at the age of ten or twelve, you may be called to lay him in the grave before he is twenty ; or if the hot-bed process does not actually destroy him, he may remain a pretty little man as he is, all the days of his life. I have seen many a plant killed by being set in too rich a soil ; and by too much sunshine and watering, as well as by too little.

But although parents have much more to do in the way of regular instruction during the period of childhood, than infancy calls for or would allow, nature is still a most active and useful teacher. That high degree of pleasure, which God has combined with the acquisition of knowledge, before the infant is capable of

study or of asking questions, is enjoyed by the child with a keener relish, if possible, as his faculties expand and the field widens. One of the early developments of childhood, (if it does not begin definitely to manifest itself in infancy,) is *curiosity*, which "grows with the growth and strengthens with the strength" for many years. Your little children want to follow you wherever you go, and see whatever you do, and try to do it themselves. They have a thousand questions to ask; and to some parents, this everlasting inquisitiveness is extremely troublesome. Their children, they say, "want to know everything, whether it concerns them at all or not; and ask more foolish questions in an hour, than any body could answer in a month. Now it might be very impertinent for grown people to ask such questions, because they have lived long enough to become familiarly acquainted with all these common subjects; but not so with children. To them, everything is new and strange: and no question, however simple, ought to be treated as foolish or impertinent, when the proper answer would add anything to their scanty stock of knowledge. I know it is often very difficult, especially for young mothers in the multitude of their domestic cares, to lend both ears to the What's this, and What's that—Who made it, and what did he make it for—where does God live, and why can't we see him, &c. &c., with which some children have an irresistible propensity to ply them, from morning to night. But every wise and considerate parent will not only be glad to hear such questions asked, but will take pains to elicit them, where curiosity is less easily excited.

It is wonderful to observe, as I have already hinted, what an amount of valuable knowledge, on an infinite variety of subjects, may be communicated and treas-

ured up in very early childhood. Where can you point me to a more charming spectacle, than that of a mother in the midst of her tender charge, listening to their artless inquiries, and satisfying their thousand marvels ; or than that of a father, walking out in a fine afternoon, with his children, now hanging upon his fingers, now chasing the butterfly from flower to flower, or skipping like lambs from hillock to hillock ; and now looking up into his face with intense interest, while he talks to them about the " trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon, to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall, and also of beasts and of fowls and of creeping things and of fishes ? " I do not object to teaching these and other branches of natural history by pictures. It is unquestionably highly proper and useful, especially where birds and animals and insects of other climes are well drawn ; but wherever it can be done with convenience, it is much better to take the child out, and show him a fine horse or beautiful bird or flower, than to amuse him with the best drawing that ever came from the hand of the artist.

And here I cannot refrain from offering one or two suggestions which have occurred to my mind, respecting those shows of foreign animals, those itinerant menageries, which are now so frequently to be met with in every part of the country. What parent would deny his children the gratification of seeing the elephant, the rhinoceros, the lion, the tiger and the leopard ? If these exhibitions were properly regulated, and not too often repeated, for one, I should think myself quite indebted to the proprietors, for affording my children so useful an amusement. But when they follow each other in such quick succession that there is hardly time for the excitement to subside in the inter-

vals ; when I look at the advertisements, large enough to cover the side of a barn, which are the precursors of these visitations ; when I see how much is made of adding a stunted zebra, or a single dandy jack, with his sword and epaulettes, to the collection ; when I see all the children of the village first running out to admire the nodding plumes of the approaching cavalcade, and then clamoring for money to see the monkeys ; when I behold the number of strong and able-bodied men who are attached to these menageries ; and when I consider the dissipation which too often marches in their train, I am led to ask, whether the evil does not more than overbalance the good ; and whether Christian parents do right in permitting their children, by frequent attendance, to patronize and encourage such exhibitions.

CHAPTER VI.

Family Reading :—An important means of improvement—A taste for reading how acquired—Selection of books—Great care and judgment requisite—Infidel and licentious writings—Novels and romances—Religious fiction.

THIS is an extremely important and delicate branch of domestic education. An early taste for reading, is one of the bright promises of future intellectual affluence, and is well nigh essential to respectable literary attainments. It is also one of the best safe-guards against coarse and grovelling habits, and dangerous juvenile allurements. During the periods of childhood and youth, there is a vast deal of leisure time, which if not filled up with something that is at once interesting and improving to the mind will be wasted, or given to folly, if not to ruinous dissipation. Besides the hours which ought to be devoted to study, or to manual industry and healthy relaxation, how many leisure moments and half hours are there, in almost every twenty-four, from the age of seven or eight, to seventeen or eighteen, which might be employed in amusing and useful reading; and which being thus employed, would greatly improve the taste, inform the conscience, enrich the imagination and enlighten the judgment.

That some children and youth, have a much higher natural relish for books than others, I very well know ;

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and that in some cases, it may be extremely difficult ever to excite much interest, under the most judicious management, I am not disposed to deny. I believe, however, that much more may be done to give all the families of any community a taste for reading, than is generally supposed. Indeed, I am strongly persuaded, that if proper care and pains were to be taken by the domestic fire-side, not one child in a hundred, would grow up, without acquiring such a taste, at least in a moderate degree.

But how is it to be formed? A few will have it at any rate. They seem to be born with it. They will learn the alphabet in spite of you; and will so eagerly devour every little book they can find at a very tender age, that the great difficulty is to hold them in check. These, however, are the exceptions. A taste for reading is, in general, gradually and not very rapidly acquired. It is not enough to tell your child, that it is of the highest importance he should love his books, and improve his leisure time in profitable reading; or to express your wonder, that now, when he is a dozen years old, he has so little taste for history, biography, travels, and the like. A *reading* taste is not to be reasoned into a boy any more than a love for some kind of food which you wish him to be fond of. You must bring interesting books into the family and place them within his reach. You must allure him by New Year's and Christmas presents, fresh and smoking from the bookseller's counter. When he comes in from play, from school, or from work, there must always be some volume, paper, or tract at hand, to catch his eye and fill up the leisure moments, which would otherwise be lost. In this way, those who are at first quite indifferent about any kind of reading, imperceptibly become

fond of glancing their eye at whatever happens to fall in their way ; and ere they, or their parents are aware of it, a taste for books is developed, or acquired, which, if rightly directed, may lead to the most important acquisitions. When, the moment a child enters the sitting room, something instructive or amusing is always in sight, and within reach, he must be stupid indeed, to sit down and look vacantly into the fire, instead of taking up whatever happens to arrest his attention upon the shelf, or side-board. Let mothers, if they find reason to complain that books and papers and pamphlets are strewed all over the house, learn the children to put them in their places, when they lay them aside ; and if the side-boards are too much encumbered with such things, let them be thankful, that they have got rid of their decanters, sling tumblers and wine glasses.

It may be objected, perhaps, "that many parents cannot afford to buy books and bring other interesting reading into their families, however great the advantage might be. It is as much as they can do, to feed and clothe their children, and furnish them with school books." I think I fully appreciate the difficulty ; but it ought to be considered, that the price of books has been so much reduced by recent improvements in paper-making, printing, &c. as to bring them within the reach of all, who have anything to spare. And certainly, it becomes those who feel too poor to expend a few dollars, annually, for profitable reading, to inquire, whether they might not make the saving, by such retrenchments in other things, as would take little or nothing from their own personal comfort, or that of their children. For myself, I should rather take but two meals a day that I might have something to spare, to imbue the minds of my children with an ardent desire

for useful knowledge, by furnishing them with interesting books, than to feed like a prince, and withhold from them these cheap means of mental improvement.

Besides, the vices of society cost infinitely more than it would require to furnish every family with sufficient reading; and many a father, who would fain excuse himself for not purchasing books, by the plea of poverty, spends ten times as much as it would take to buy them, at the tavern, in making himself first a fool, next a brute, and last a demon. Very few sober and industrious parents are so poor that they cannot now and then spare a dollar or two, to develope and gratify the taste of their children; and if there are any such, how many hundred tracts, of an intensely interesting character, can be had, for almost nothing.

Another way, in which children of a suitable age, may be inspired with a taste for reading, is by example; and by showing an-interest in whatever interests them. When a child sees his older brothers and sisters improving their leisure time in reading, and hears them talking with sparkling animation, about what they find in their favorite authors, he will be induced, almost as a matter of course, to fall into the same habit. But the example of parents is calculated to have a still more powerful influence; especially when they connect it with such winning encouragements, as strong affection almost instinctively prompts. It is extremely natural for children, as well as for adults, to wish others to enjoy, whatever in their reading, is highly interesting to themselves. Hence they will ask their parents to hear such passages read aloud; and it is of great importance to gratify them, as far as possible. No matter if you have heard the story, or the anecdote, or the historical incident a hundred times before. It is

new to your child, and the more you seem to enjoy it, the better will he love to read. So in the long winter evenings, there is hardly any child, of nine, or ten, but that may be allured to sit down and read to his, or her mother, with a great deal of pleasure and advantage. I can testify from experience, and I trust with gratitude, how my own honored mother, who had but very little time to spare, from her weighty family cares, used to encourage her children to read to her, and how much this contributed to our happiness, if not to our improvement.

The selection of books is a very responsible and difficult task, and is becoming more and more difficult every year. If there were but few books in market, we might soon run the catalogue over, and mark off the choicest of them, to order. But in this most prolific book making age, where shall we begin, and how shall we know when we are through? Where so much that is seductive and contagious, is carefully disguised and frosted over, to make the book sell, how shall parents who have but little time to examine, guard against exposing their children to the insidious poison?

Were a Christian father, to put his sons and daughters under the private tuition of several teachers, in the different branches of education, he would feel it his duty to be well assured of their good moral character, as well as of their aptness and ability to teach, before bringing them into his house. If he believed, or suspected, that any one of them would ever use profane, or obscene language, or sing licentious songs in the hearing of his children, or set himself insidiously to pollute their imaginations and undermine their virtue, a Christian parent would no sooner admit such a teach-

er of French, or of Music, into the loved domestic circle, than he would inoculate his children with the plague, or bring an adder into his parlor, for them to admire its beautiful colors and play with its forked tongue. And ought not every parent to be as watchful against licentious and immoral books, as he would be against admitting teachers of the same character into his family? What matters it, whether the heart of a loved child is corrupted by a profligate master of music, or a seductive writer of romance? What should we think of a man's consistency and high-toned moral self complacency, who in mourning over the ruin of his first born, should say, "I have this to console me, that I always kept him under the tuition of strictly moral and religious masters," when this very father, so careful and conscientious, was known to have tolerated books of immoral and licentious tendency in his family.

In regard to this point, the case is a perfectly clear one. I may no more pay my money to hire a novelist, or a dramatist, to teach my children impiety, or impurity, than I may hire the same teaching by the living voice in my parlor. Parents, therefore, in selecting books for family reading, ought to strike off at one heavy dash, all the cart-loads and ship-loads of plays, novels and romances, which offend openly, though ever so unfrequently, against piety, morality and virtue. A parent ought never if he can help it, to allow a fascinating writer to say that behind the screen, to the *eye* of his child, which he would not permit any one to breathe into his *ear*. I am quite aware, that this is an extremely sweeping proscription of the popular literature of the day; but I cannot in conscience, either modify, or recall it. No book, whatever may be its merits in oth-

er respects, which takes the name of God in vain, that is, which introduces the name of the Deity profanely, or irreverently, or which contains any profane oath, whether vulgar, or genteel, or which is impure should ever be brought into a family. If an adherence to this rule should exclude some of the most admired poetry and fascinating historical romances in the language, it cannot be helped. The enthusiastic admirers of such writers as Byron and Scott will not agree with me I dare say; and if they can point you to volumes of these mighty masters, which are not deformed by profane exclamations, dashes, or allusions, and which contain nothing to offend the ear of modesty, let them come into your family circles, and receive a due share of attention, (if indeed you can confine them to that,) but otherwise, let them be forever excluded.

“ But what do you think of the great Poet of Nature, the immortal Bard of Avon?” I am almost sorry you ask me the question—for I admire his genius exceedingly, and can easily conceive how he might have been, as Milton will be, I have no doubt, one of the favorite poets in the millennium. But if I must speak frankly, under the pains and penalties of the highest literary tribunals in the world, I am sorry that most of his plays were ever written. I believe it will appear in the Great Day, that they have done more harm than good. The world, indeed, would have lost some of the finest imagery that ever enriched the fancy of an uninspired writer, but we should still have had the imagery of the Bible, which is still finer. Shakspeare as he is, is not a fit book for *family* reading. What Christian father, or virtuous mother, would allow him, if he were now alive, to come into a blooming circle of sons and daughters and recite his plays, just as they stand in the best

editions? It is scarcely possible they should pass through the youthful mind and imagination, without leaving a stain behind them. If they must be read by our sons and daughters in their nonage, let us have a carefully expurgated edition. The objection that it will no longer be *Shakspeare*, must, I am aware, be fatal to every such proposal, in the judgment of mere critics and scholars; but while I readily concede, that all the beauties of the prince of dramatists could not be retained in such an edition, I cannot think, that the loss on this score need be very considerable, and I am *morally* certain, that what would be left, would be worth vastly more in a rising family, than the whole, as it came from the pen of the author.

Having thrown out of the family circle, as I trust, by common consent, one large class of books, on account of their profane and lecherous blemishes, let me call upon parents to extend their moral censorship to another class of works, which though they may not so grossly shock the common ear, are equally dangerous:—I mean those of an infidel cast, whether it be more open, or concealed. It is unhappily the case, that some of the most fascinating writers in every branch of polite and popular literature, are avowed, or thinly disguised unbelievers: while others, who profess to receive the Bible as the word of God, quote it irreverently, if not even profanely, and contrive, in one way or another, to throw doubts, if not ridicule, upon experimental religion. There are a thousand ways in which an ingenious author of this class, may undermine or corrupt the faith of his youthful readers. He may do it by enlisting all the hypocrisy and extravagances of nominal Christianity into his service, and making true religion accountable for the numberless crimes and fol-

lies, of its numberless counterfeits; by holding up the whole body of the clergy to suspicion, in the persons of the Jesuits, or the revolting revelations of some foreign monastery; by ringing loud changes upon the names which infidels and persecutors have reproachfully applied to the pious objects of their hatred and ridicule; by fastening the charge of fanaticism upon whole evangelical denominations, on account of the extravagances of a few individuals; by telling ludicrous stories about some simple country "parson," or good puritan "deacon;" by amusing but reproachful anecdotes and historical allusions; by sly, malignant innuendos; emphatic dashes, triple notes of admiration, &c. &c. Such books as Gibbon's *Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*, and Volney's *Ruins*, in which skepticism is most insidiously wrought into the whole warp of the fabric, ought never to be brought into a family, or to meet the eye of the young and unsuspecting reader.

There is not a Christian in the land, nay, there is not a parent who respects religion at all, that would not be shocked to have a polite and fascinating acquaintance, or stranger, spend evening after evening, in amusing his children, with glowing historical narrative or ingenious fiction, interlarded with insidious slights of the Bible, and humorous caricatures of good men. How then can a parent allow an inch of room, in his family library, for any writer of the class, which I have just mentioned? How will that father feel, whose sons are now drinking in infidelity from these sparkling fountains, under his own eye, when he comes to meet them at the bar of God? And as it is impossible for parents, in general, to examine all the books that claim public patronage, and knock at every man's door

for admittance, is it not their plain duty, to consult the judgment of trusty friends, who have more leisure ; and is it not the equally plain duty of these friends, to be prepared to advise them ?

“ But what do you think of novels and other kindred works of fiction, where the language is chaste, the sentiments unexceptionable, and the moral good ? Shall they be brought into the domestic circle, or excluded from it ? ” A full answer to this question, would require much more time than I can at present devote to it. Absolutely to proscribe *all* fiction, would, perhaps, be going too far. I think I could select a dozen volumes, besides Robinson Crusoe, which I should be willing to have my children read in their minority. But nothing is more to be deprecated, in a family, than a morbid appetite for novels ; and all experience proves, how difficult it is, to keep it from becoming absolutely *ravenous*, if it is indulged at all. Reading one work of fiction, is almost certain to create in the young and susceptible mind, a more eager demand for another ; and the demand rises at every step of the progress, till it is prepared to break over all bounds, and to devour whatever comes in its way, however it may inflame the passions, pollute the imagination, or corrupt the heart. There is a striking resemblance in this respect, between the novel reader and the dram drinker. Both begin moderately. Both are sure that a little does them good, and that they can refrain whenever they please. The appetite of both is sharpened by indulgence till they lose all self-control, and are completely at the mercy of its insatiableness. As the drunkard will contrive to get the means of intoxication, in spite of every friendly remonstrance and precaution, so the young and prurient novel reader, will beg or borrow clandes-

tinely, when the books cannot otherwise be obtained. The only perfectly safe course, in either case is, "touch not, taste not, handle not." One grand objection against putting popular works of fiction into the hands of our youth of both sexes is, that the world of romance, differs so entirely from the rough, stormy, and matter-of-fact world, in which they are to live and be *happy*, if they can; and certainly to *suffer*, whatever pains they may take to shun it. Suppose your blooming daughter, of fifteen, could be transported into some paradise of perpetual spring and spicy breezes—of odoriferous flowers, and feathered harmony, and gushing marble fountains, and banyan shades, and everlasting sunshine—what kind of preparation would she be making, in such bowers of unmingled delights, for returning, at the end of five or ten years, to spend her life in this cold region where she was born, upon which the curse of God has so heavily fallen? But far worse than this must it be for her to dwell for the same number of years in the fairy lands of romance, and then come down to the dull prose and discordant elements—the thousand inconveniences and cares and toils and disappointments of real life. When the novelist can plant and water and illuminate some terrestrial paradise; and shut out pain and sorrow and sin; and give our children a life lease of it, it will be time enough to introduce them to his acquaintance; but till then, the less they have to do with this class of writers the better.

I proceed next to offer a few thoughts upon the *religious* fictions of the day. Is it a safe and profitable kind of reading? Who does not know that books of this class, have been greatly multiplied within the last five and twenty years: and it is easily accounted for. The number of religious families in our country, has very

much increased; this has proportionally increased the demand for religious reading. Popular writers, always awake to the fluctuations of public taste, have met the demand, by mingling fictitious amusement, for the younger branches of such families, with religious phraseology and religious instruction. Of these writers, there are two classes—those that give a religious cast to their books, to make them *sell*, and those truly pious authors, whose aim it is, by the aid of interesting fiction to allure their young readers, to the love and practice of religion.

The first of these classes commonly make extremely awkward work of it. Having no religion themselves, and never having read the Bible, with any serious attention, they know not what to do with it. A certain number of theological terms and phrases must be introduced into every chapter; but where to bring them in, they seem to be about as much at a loss, as a good man would be, when to swear, and when to let it alone. Hence their religious novels, written for the special edification of our children, because we object to the old fashioned class of romances, often present such grotesque specimens of patch work, as are rarely to be met with in any other writings. “The apples of gold” are set in anything, but “pictures of silver.” The quotations from Scripture are hardly ever apposite; and often, when they think they have rounded off a period most piously, it is difficult to acquit them of taking the name of God in vain. Whenever they *lug* in the doctrines of the Bible, the views which they present, are sure to be extremely crude, if not palpably and grossly erroneous. Let parents then, beware of this whole class of misnamed *religious* novels. They are more dangerous in a rising family than almost any others.

The second class, I mean those that are written by

pious authors, and are both theologically and evangelically correct, it is not so easy to dispose of. I should not dare to say, that they have done no good ; and were it possible, in practice, to draw the line between them and the least exceptionable of the first class, and at the same time to prevent their being too much multiplied, I should hail them as valuable auxiliaries in Christian education. But here lies the grand difficulty. If you put fiction, which is really religious, into the hands of your children, they will be extremely apt to extend their reading to that which is so only in *name*, and to prefer it as more congenial to the native depravity of the human heart. "What book is that, my son, which you are reading with so much interest to-day?" "It is a religious novel." You look at the title and shake your head. "Where did you borrow it? I had rather you would not read it especially on the Sabbath." "But father, it is certainly a *religious* book, for it is just like my last New Year's present, which you said was written by one of the most pious ladies in England." Now *you* may see a heaven-wide difference between the two; but your child does not; and though you may persuade or command him to break off in the midst of a story, he will be exceedingly apt to take it up again, as soon as your back is turned. Our unconverted children will not discriminate. We cannot expect it. And if we countenance religious novel reading at all, the danger is, that the more tares and chaff there are in the wheat, the better they will like it.

And even if there was no false theology mingled with fiction, the question would arise in the mind of every pious and intelligent parent, how far he ought to encourage such reading in his family. If it be found by experience, that it is the well-told *story* and nothing

else, which rivets the attention of the child—that the *fiction* of the book, is all in all with him, and the religion goes for nothing; or if while his appetite is sharpened for this kind of aliment he has less and less relish for the Bible and for all other religious reading which does not come recommended by the charms of fictitious narrative, then the query may well arise, whether it is not a duty to exclude this latter class of books, altogether? Even gold may be bought too dear, especially where there is a very large portion of alloy. It is not enough for a Christian father to be satisfied, that the books which he is advised to put into the hands of his children, are of a decidedly moral and religious tendency. He is bound to ask another question, “Will they, upon the whole, do more harm than good, by creating and pampering a vicious taste for highly seasoned condiments? Will they displace the Bible and usurp the place of all other solid religious reading?”

For my own part, I have come gradually and I may say reluctantly to the conclusion, that most of the religious reading in our families, is unprofitable, if not in the long run absolutely injurious to our children. It is not calculated to make them thinking, intelligent and full grown Christians, but to keep them always in a sort of excitable, dwarfish and fitful minority. In this remark I include the thousand religious story books designed for the nursery, with which the land is flooded, as well as fictitious works of higher pretensions. I hope the reader will not misunderstand me. I do not object altogether to religious story books, infant biography and the like. Not a few of these little 18 and 24mos are very instructive, as well as interesting. But we have too many of them—altogether too many in our nurseries, in our children’s closets, and in our Sabbath

School libraries. Our babes have too much milk and they are kept too long upon it. They ought to have more meat. Certain it is, that from some cause, or other, young Christians of full stature and intellectual maturity, do not now take up solid practical and doctrinal religious reading, with anything like that zest, which young disciples of their age did, one third of a century ago; and I ascribe the difference mainly to the multiplication of books of that class which I have just mentioned. It is so delightful to run over volume after volume, borne on by the mere current of *feeling*, that *thinking* becomes irksome; and when our sons and daughters should be reading Howe and Baxter and Whitherspoon and Dwight, and Robert Hall and Jonathan Edwards, they are still poring over the last religious annual, or story book.

And what confirms me still more in the opinion which I have ventured to express, respecting the Lilliputian tendency of light and fictitious religious reading is, that even many fathers and mothers in our Israel, who were brought up on the substantial aliment of the old Puritans, are now regaling themselves with the condiments of the nursery, instead of adhering to the meat which they were once so fond of, and in the strength of it, "going on unto perfection." Of those, also, who still retain their fondness for the old standard religious authors, how many now prefer the most summary abridgements and compends, to the thick quartos and heavy octavos, which they used to sit and ponder over, hour after hour, upon the Sabbath, and by the quiet evening fireside.

CHAPTER VII.

Family Reading :—Juvenile literature—Travels—Voyages—History—Elegant literature—Political economy—Intellectual and moral philosophy—The Bible—Objections answered—Advantages pointed out.

I HAVE said, that in my judgment, the children of pious families have by far too many religious story books put into their hands, and are kept too long upon milk, essences and high-seasoned condiments. The same objection lies against almost all the family reading of the present day. It is light, exceedingly light—consisting of stories, nursery dialogues, scraps, extracts, anecdotes, &c. &c. The objection here, lies not against the *quality*, but the *quantity*. A certain amount of such easy and familiar reading, in childhood, is very useful. We could hardly do without it. To have it all swept off, would be a great loss. But as it was with the volumes of the ancient Sybil, one third of the number would be worth more than the whole. Dr. B. of C. once shrewdly remarked, respecting a sermon which he had just heard, “A few flowers will do very well, but who wants a whole bushel of dandelions?” So in this case—there is incomparably too much baby literature upon our book-seller’s counters, and flying abroad, like the locusts, glittering in the sun, in their septennial transmigrations. These little books are so new, so well got up, so amusing and so cheap,

that our children cannot help teasing us for them, and we cannot help buying them. If childhood was the only period of human life, it would do perhaps; and it must be owned, that nothing is better calculated than this kind of family reading, to prolong and perpetuate the lisping period of intellectual babyhood. This is my objection. In the reading which we sanction and recommend, we ought to keep up with the years, as they roll on, and to provide such aliment as will minister to mental growth and maturity. We cannot keep our children always in the nursery and trucklebed, if we would. They will grow up and become men and women, both in age and stature, in spite of us. As parents, "we are debtors," both to the church and the state, and we have no right to turn them off, with a race of intellectual pigmies.

I love to see the dear little prattlers with their picture books and infantile quartos; and am quite willing they should prattle a year or two longer, than some of my friends would think either manly, or womanly; but I do not like to see them thumbing and devouring Robinson Crusoe and books of that class, when they ought to be reading the best standard authors in the language. It is doing them and the public great injustice to allow it.

Now if you wish to avoid this great evil, take the matter into your own hands, and keep the early reading of your children as much as possible, under your own eye. You cannot, I am aware, reduce the existing pethora in juvenile literature. Authors will write, publishers will deluge the markets, and multitudes will continue to purchase. But you can make your selections. You can allure your children to the love of reading, by putting a few books suited to their tender

age into their hands. As soon, however, as they have acquired the taste, and are old enough to fix their attention longer upon what they read, it is of the highest importance, that you should lead them on, step by step, as fast as their growing strength will enable them to follow you. If you leave them to luxuriate among snow-drops and butterflies, under the notion that they are acquiring a taste for graver application, you will find yourselves mistaken. You must gently and almost imperceptibly remove the favorite story-books out of their sight, and substitute larger and more instructive volumes. Begin, for example, with some interesting book of travels. Gather as many of the blooming circle around you, as are of a suitable age, in a winter's evening. The first question is, "where did the traveler go—what countries did he visit?" Spread out your map upon the table, and sit down with your children as to a banquet. Where there are several of them, let them read by turns. Show by your attention, how deeply interested you feel yourself. Explain whatever you apprehend they may not fully understand; refer often to the map, and point out the situation and bearings of all the more important places. Ask them the meaning of difficult words, and encourage them to pause and ask just as many questions as they please. In this way they will soon become deeply interested—quite as much so, as they ever were in the tales of the nursery—whereas, if you had merely put the same book into their hands, and left them to read it, out of the sunshine of your smiles, and without the aid of your questions and explanations, it might have been an irksome and profitless task. Never continue the exercise so long, as to make it tiresome. Rather leave off while the children are wide awake and would be glad

to go over a few pages more. They will then look forward with desire and even impatience to your next leisure hour, and when it arrives, will spread the table, and bring out the map, and read and listen, with increasing satisfaction.

In this way you will, for the most part, find it perfectly easy to wean your children from the breast, and to give them a high relish for more substantial nutriment. When they have finished one book of travels they will call for another. Having gained some knowledge of the interior of America, they will want to pass over to Europe—to visit London, and Paris, and Rome, and St. Petersburg—to wander among the Alps, and bask on the sunny plains of Italy—to go to Athens and stand on Mars' Hill—thence to Constantinople, to Egypt, or to the Holy Land—and so across to Persia, India, Birmah and China. And when they have read as many travels as you think their time will allow, they will not be less delighted, in taking up voyages and sailing round the world with Capt. Cook—touching at the great Islands in the Indian Ocean—exploring the vast Pacific Archipelago—penetrating the ice of the arctic circle with Capt. Franklin, and wintering with Sir John Ross, amid the ice-berges of the pole, the ever fitful flashes of the Aurora Borealis and under the very paws of *Ursa Major*. In such a course of reading, your children will shortly become so much interested, that whether you can command the time to sit down with them or not, they will go on; and indeed will leave you little else to do, but to select and furnish the books. In making your selections you will find none more instructive, or interesting, than those volumes, to which the researches, labors and progress of modern missions have given birth; such as the narratives and journals

of Tyerman, and Bennet, and Ellis, and Williams, and Gatzlaff, and Smith, and Dwight, and Parker, and many others. And I take this opportunity to say, that Protestant Missionaries from our own and from other countries, are at this moment doing more to make us acquainted with the actual condition of the world, than any other class of men. Living as they do, in the remotest regions and among all the different races that have sprung from the first human pair, they enjoy advantages for becoming acquainted with the character, habits and condition of all the great branches of the human family, which very few others possess, so that by putting this class of books into the hands of your children, you will accomplish two great objects at once. You will furnish them with the most authentic information, concerning the state of barbarous countries, and will interest them in the all-important cause of foreign missions.

From voyages and travels, you may pass to *history*; or if you think it best, you may begin with history, and provided you are willing to take the necessary pains at first, you will find no serious difficulty, in giving your children as high a relish for this kind of reading, as you could wish. The human mind loves knowledge and in its healthy and unsophisticated state, it loves *truth* better than fiction. The history of man, in all ages, in all countries, under all forms of government, in all stages of improvement! Can there be anything like it to excite curiosity and stimulate to inquiry? But with few exceptions, the young mind must be put upon the right track. The great majority of children will cleave to their story books and become too much enamored with fiction, to relish anything else, unless they are led up into a higher and clearer region at the right time.

If you wish your children to love history, take your map and sit down with them as before. They will first want to know something about their own country—its discovery, its aboriginal inhabitants, its extent, its settlement, its mountains, rivers and lakes, its present condition, population, cities, &c. By selecting a good history, stopping every now and then to explain, to point out places upon the map and to answer questions, you will find it extremely easy to gain their attention, and make them regard as a privilege, what they at first, perhaps, looked forward to as a task. When you have kept them long enough upon America, you can take up the history of England; and so proceed from country to country, and travel back to the beginning of time. The histories of Greece and Rome and Carthage and Egypt, will interest them exceedingly; and so, in fact, will all others, whether ancient or modern; if they are drawn up in a pleasing style, and are read with the help of good maps, and in the presence of a listening and delighted parent. Neither voyages, travels, nor history, should ever be read in the family without maps. If they are not used for a considerable time at least, half the pleasure and more than half the profit is lost; and good atlases are now so cheap, that a little saving will enable almost any family to purchase them. The more time you can devote to the historical reading of your children, and indeed to all their reading, the better. They will love you the more, and more they love you, the better will they love such books as you recommend.

As they advance in age and in their education, the best English Essayists and other models of fine writing, should be put into their hands; and from these, as their powers are more fully developed and unfolded,

toward the close of their minority, they may proceed to more abstruse works, in the various departments of education, government, political economy and intellectual and moral philosophy.

But here I may be asked, who is to take that important lead and direction in family reading, which I have above insisted on? Is the father to do it alone, or is the mother to do it, or should they co-operate in this, as well as every other branch of home education? Certainly they should co-operate. Where both are living, the whole duty, (or privilege, rather,) devolves upon neither. Which shall do the most, depends upon circumstances. Sometimes one and sometimes the other, will have the most leisure. It does not follow, by any means, because the mother is always at home, and the father necessarily much abroad, that she is to do all and he nothing, in any branch of education. I know well, how impossible it is for professional men to command their time; and that various branches of business leave fathers but little time to spend with their families. But I am free to confess, that we might all find more time to read with our children, and to help their mothers in training them up for both worlds, than we do. And as to the great majority of fathers in this country, they have a vast deal of leisure, especially in the long winter evenings, which they might devote to useful reading with their children, and thus continually add to their own stock of knowledge, at the same time that they would be imparting and enjoying the highest domestic happiness by their firesides. How much do a large class of intelligent and excellent fathers lose, by spending so many of their evenings abroad, or if they do not absolutely lose the time, how much less do they enjoy and gain, than they might by

staying at home, and how much do their children lose by their absence. What an amount of most interesting and useful knowledge might they accumulate in half a dozen years simply by the help of such a series of volumes as Harper's Family Library. And is there, can there be any purer earthly felicity, than virtuous parents experience, in the society of their children, and in leading them on in paths of intellectual, moral and religious improvement?

It is taken for granted, that the *Bible* will be read morning and evening, accompanied with other devotional exercises, in every Christian family. That our children should be taught from their earliest years to listen to it, as the word of God, all but open infidels will agree. But on the question whether the sacred volume ought to be used as a reading-book, either in the family or the school, there is not the same unanimity of opinion. Some parents are afraid, that if it is read by their children, for any other than strictly religious purposes, they will lose their reverence for it: that it will be brought down, in their estimation, to a level with the writings of uninspired men, and that thus, the great object of it, as a divine revelation, will be defeated. This will depend, I think, almost entirely upon the parent or teacher. If you show but little more reverence for the Bible yourself, than for any common book, and merely put it into hands of your children as an entertaining history, or as furnishing some of the best lessons for improvement in the art of reading they will of course be very apt to lose sight of its sacredness. But it would be extremely illogical to infer, on this account, that it is not safe to use it as a family reading book. If your children see that you yourself regard the Scriptures as the oracles of the living God; if

when you put these "lively oracles" into their hands, you exhort them to receive the gift, as from the "Father of lights;" and if by suitable remarks you keep this in their remembrance afterwards, what danger is to be apprehended, from that familiarity with the sacred volume, against which the objection is supposed to lie. If it is infinitely better than any other book, ought not our children to read it more than they do any other, that every part of it may be familiar to their minds, and that they may be able to turn to any passage without the help of a lexicon?

But the more fully to test the validity of such an objection, let us appeal to facts. Is there less reverence for the Bible, in families where it is read a great deal, on week days as well as on the Sabbath, than in other families? Do fewer children of the former become pious, than of the latter! No. God blesses his own truth, by fastening it upon the memory and the conscience, though the individual is often, at the commencement, unconscious of the process which is going on within him. In regard to the corruptions of Christianity, and the various forms of heathenism, there can be no question. The church of Rome understands this matter perfectly. Though she does not allow the Scriptures to be read in the family, or the school, she puts her breviary, her legends and her traditions into the hands of all the children of her communion, at the tenderest age. These they are taught to regard as sacred, they constitute their *only* reading; and what is the consequence? Do they reject the Romish faith, because the books in which it is taught are always before them? On the contrary, they drink it in with their mother's milk, and ever after adhere to it with a tenacity which might well make multitudes of Pro-

testants blush for their own instability. What other reading book have the great body of Mahomedans, either in their families or their schools, but the Koran? And does this familiarity with their *Bible* shake the faith of their children in the truth of its absurdities and blasphemies? Every body knows that it has the contrary effect. It binds them to the religion of the false prophet forever. So among the Hindoos and the Chinese. Their *sacred books* are their most familiar reading books; and it is this influence more than anything else, perhaps, that holds them in the most deplorable intellectual and spiritual bondage, from generation to generation. Why then should the Holy Scriptures, the word of the one living and true God, have diametrically the opposite effect upon the minds of our children, if we make them more familiar with it, in their tender years than with any other book? The objection, I am sure, cannot be maintained on any fair ground of argument or experience.

It may assist us to estimate the value of the Bible, as a family reading book, if before we look at it as a divine revelation, we suppose it to have been found half a century ago, somewhere in Judea, and to have come into our hands merely as an authentic historical record of past ages. Viewed in this light, it would be invaluable; for it is the oldest history in the world. It carries us back to the beginning of time, and gives us the only rational account of the creation and primitive state of the world, and of the origin of all things. It tells us how and where the true golden age began, when "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy;" and how suddenly and darkly it ended, when our first parents eat the forbid-

en fruit and were driven out of Eden: From the apostacy it brings us down through a period of sixteen hundred years, to the general deluge; tells us how the world was repopled by the family of Noah, and then, in connection with the history of God's chosen people, tells us of Egypt and Babylon and Ninevah and Tyre; of the four great monarchies also, and of those ruthless conquerors, who successively trod down the nations as the mire of the street. *Herodotus* is allowed by common consent to be the father of profane history, because he first collected the materials, and gave them the form of authentic narrative. All before him was fable, tradition, wild conjecture, and the most revolting mythological absurdity. But *Herodotus* flourished only 450 years before Christ, so that the Bible was the only history in the world on which the least reliance could be placed for more than 3500 years after the creation, that is, during much more than half the period since "the foundations of the earth were laid!" Would not this single circumstance entitle it to be received and read in our families, if it had no other commendation?

But where else can we find such pure morality—such masterly biographical sketches of good men and of bad men—such dissections of the human heart—such examples of all that is tender and lovely and elevated on the one hand, and of all that is malignant and diabolical on the other? Where else can we look for such exquisite poetry, such rich stores of didactic wisdom, and so many transcendent examples of the sublime and beautiful? Surely it were impossible to read such a book as this too much, or to give it too high a place in the family library, even if it were not inspired.

What shall we say, then, when we consider, that the authors of this book "spake and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost"—that it is the only written revelation of the mind and will of God, that this world has ever received, or ever will receive—that it is the only infallible rule of human faith and practice—the only volume in which "life and immortality are brought to light?" Shall we not read it? Shall we not recommend it to our children as above all price, and show them how much we value it, by having it read more than any other book in our families? In this respect there has been a sad falling off within my own recollection. The Bible is not read half so much in religious families, as it was thirty years ago. In too many cases, it is all but supplanted, even on the Lord's day, by religious newspapers, story-books and other light reading, which it would be a misnomer to call *religious*, even in the most *liberal* sense of the term. Formerly, as soon as children could read in easy lessons, the Bible was put into their hands, to be read through in a given time, and then to be received as a present. The first reading was generally finished in a year; and it was not uncommon for children to go through with both Testaments three or four times before they were a dozen years old. In this way they almost committed large portions of the Scriptures to memory; and many have been heard to bless God, as they were ripening for heaven in old age, that their minds were in this way so early enriched with his sacred truth. But now the *gift* of the sacred volume comes first in order, and if a few of our children read it through *once*, in the course of two or three years, it is regarded as a great achievement; while the great majority, if they undertake the task at all, relinquish it before it is half accomplished.

Indeed, I am afraid it would be found, upon strict inquiry, that a great many children of adult age in Christian families, and even some professors of religion among them, have never read the *whole* Bible through. And if they never have it is probable that they never will. Indeed, there are Christian parents who begin to doubt whether some parts of the Bible ought to be read at all by their children, on the score of modesty. I am free to admit, that incomparable as the English version is, there are some words and phrases which have become objectionable, by long and vulgar use. But let us beware that we do not carry the objection too far. Every one who believes that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God," must allow that whatever change is desirable in the *language*, the *meaning*, the *ideas* ought to be retained; and who will contradict the Apostle, or rather the Spirit of God, by saying that all Scripture is *not* profitable," though it may be inspired? He who gave us the Bible, the *whole* Bible, knew perfectly well "what was in man," and understood all the topics which were needful to make it just such a book as we want. It may be, therefore that the very passages which are objected to, are calculated when read under the direction of a judicious parent, to guard the child against the most perilous seductive influence to which he may be exposed, and to strengthen the principle of virtue within him. We may "wrest the Scriptures to our own destruction, at *any* period of life; but it were impious to look upon this as the natural and necessary tendency of any part of God's Holy Book: and I have no doubt that some young persons have been made infidels by the religious fastidiousness of which I have just been speaking. "Can that be the word of God," they have been ready to ask, "which

our parents do not think fit for us to read ; and if these parts are not inspired, who knows but that the whole is a forgery?" For myself, I think it infinitely the safest way to take the Bible as it is, and hand it over to my children, as a "light to their feet and a lamp to their path."

But in recommending the sacred volume as a family reading book I have much more in view, than merely giving it to children, and requiring them to read so many chapters daily, till it is finished. I know not how any parent can spend a part of his leisure time more profitably to himself, and to those whom he most tenderly loves, than by sitting down with them and going over the history of the creation, of the fall, of the flood, of Abraham, of Joseph, of the plagues of Egypt, of the deliverance of Israel and their forty years' sojourn in the wilderness, of Samuel, and David, and all the kings, of Daniel, and Nehemiah, and the several captivities—of Peter and Paul, and John, and above all of Jesus Christ—as his incarnation, life, miracles, doctrines, death, resurrection and ascension are drawn out in the four gospels. This, as every one knows, is but a glance at the rich and inexhaustible treasures of "wisdom and knowledge," in the Holy Scriptures. Nothing is easier than to interest the minds of children, at the tenderest age, in Biblical history and biography. It does not require superior learning, or talents. Good sense and a warm heart will enable any parent, with the helps of which he may easily avail himself, to make the Scriptures the most profitable, as well as one of the most engaging books in the world, for family reading. Biblical history, however, it will occur to every one, ought, like profane history, to be read with a good atlas, spread out upon the table for con-

stant reference. Is it the ark resting upon Ararat, your children will want to know where it is situated. Is it the journey of the children of Egypt to Canaan; through what waters and countries did they pass? Is it Babylon; where was it situated, and what kind of a city was it? And so of everything else, the blooming group around you, will be vastly more interested and profited by seeing where the Patriarchs and Apostles lived, and where the events recorded in the Bible transpired, than they could be without the maps. I have only room to add, that the more familiarly you can refer to ancient manners, customs, &c. the better will your children understand the Scriptures.

CHAPTER VIII.

Habits :—Early rising—Cold water and early ablutions—Plain diet—Plain lodging—Prompt obedience—Putting things in their place—Shutting doors—Generosity—Industry.

It had grown into a proverb long before any of us were born, that "habit is second nature." The meaning is, that by accustoming ourselves to any indulgence, self-denial, or employment—any bodily or mental training, we acquire an aptitude for it, which gradually becomes a fixed and spontaneous propensity, almost as hard to be eradicated, changed, or resisted, as the cravings of the natural appetites, or the unnoticed action of the vital functions. The moment our children come into the world, they begin to form habits of one sort, or another. Many of these become confirmed, even in infancy—others are formed and settled during the period of childhood, and others still later, in the rapid developments of youthful minority.

Whether if man had not fallen, the formation of good habits would have required any special watchfulness, or painstaking, on the part of parents, I do not profess myself competent positively to decide, though I think it would. For although children in that case would have been born perfectly holy, still they would have been creatures of emotion and imitation, and might have needed the molding hand of parental experience and affection, to bring them "up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." But however it

might have been with our children in this respect, had sin never entered the world, we know how it is now. They are "prone to evil, as the sparks fly upward." If let alone, and suffered to follow the own inclinations, they are certain, at a very early period, to form habits injurious alike to their bodies and their minds—hostile equally to their present and eternal well-being. To enumerate all the habits, good or bad, which the children of any family may form and in fact will form, in the several stages of their minority, would require more room than I have any right to ask for, and would take up much more time, than my pressing engagements will allow. Every parent can learn what they are by reflection, observation and experience. I shall mention but a very few of them. The first of these is early rising.

The natural propensity of children is, to indulge themselves in bed to a late hour. The homely complaint, that "they never want to go to bed; nor to get up," has more of truth and nature in it, than one would be apt at first to suppose. Some I know, while very young, are troublesome in the opposite extreme. Their little voices are heard at too early an hour in the cold winter mornings, for their mother's comfort. But if you find them somewhat too wide awake in infancy and early childhood, you may be sure that they will love their morning pillows but too well, as soon as they become old enough to do anything, or in other words to make themselves useful in the family. O then, the bed is so soft and warm, it is so hard to open their eyes, and so difficult to stir hand or foot.

Now this is a propensity which must not be indulged. If it is, it will soon grow into a yawning and slothful habit. You will find it more and more diffi-

cult to get them up to prayers and breakfast. Every consideration that has any bearing on the question, is in favor of early rising, both in winter and summer. It is greatly conducive to *health*. The morning air is more bracing and balmy, than during any other part of the twenty-four hours. Every boy or girl, who can be spared from household affairs, should be abroad with the lark and the robin, inhaling it. What will your sons or daughters be good for, if you allow them to be dozing and dreaming and breathing carbon in a close room, and dreading to get up, when they ought to be out brushing off the dew drops from the flowers, and listening to the minstrelsy of the orchard and the grove, or with burning cheeks and frosted breath, dallying with the hoary locks of winter? It is easier for a child to rise at *five* o'clock in summer, than at *seven*; at *seven* in winter than *nine*. If you allow your children to become sluggards when they are young, they will probably carry the habit with them through life, crying, "A little more sleep, a little more slumber a little more folding of the hands to sleep." Begin early then. Fix your hour and adhere to it. Let your child know that you have studied the laws of the Medes and Persians, and he will see that there is no use in trying to plead off. In this way he will become accustomed to early rising, while he is yet a child. As the habit gains strength, it will become more and more pleasant to him. He will be likely to retain it when he is no longer under your eye, or your roof. He will live longer, and be more happy, and do more good, than if he had been indulged, when he thought it a hardship to be roused so early from his slumbers. If your boy does not get sleep enough by the time you set for his rising, send him to bed an hour earlier, and the matter will soon be adjusted.

Accustom your children from the first to the free use of cold water. This is the true *aqua vita*—the very elixir of life. There is nothing like it to promote health and length of days; to keep off the blues; to lubricate the eye, and to energize the brain, in the whole *Materia Medica*. The habitual use of it, both external and internal, from the tenderest age, would, I was going to say, prevent half the ills “that flesh is heir to.” There is nothing like cold water, to cure sprains and bruises. I have tried it for thirty years upon myself and in my family, with infallible success. A small quantity of it, freely applied for a few minutes, when your child has fallen down stairs, or cracked his finger, instead of his walnuts, is worth more than all the camphorated Jamaica in the apothecary shops. And then, those copious morning ablutions, sparkling from the pure fountain, both in winter and summer, how invigorating, how delightful! You smile, I suppose, but how *delightful*! Try it. Just accustom your children to it, at all seasons of the year, and in a cold room, and see if they do not become fond of it. Continue the practice of washing them freely in cold water every day of the year, as soon as they are out of bed, and it will ere long become too grateful to be omitted, when they are too old to require your particular attention. For myself, I would almost as soon *drink* a tumbler of luke warm water, as even in the month of January, to use the same temperature in washing, or bathing, I mean so long as I am in health. It is altogether too *qualmish*. And I cannot help pitying those pale faced, half animated little dolls, that are doomed to shiver over a hot fire, under the application of warm water, in preparing them for breakfast, instead of mantling their cheeks, and kind-

ling up their bright eyes, with both the water and the air at the freezing point.

In regard to the daily and exclusive use of cold water, as a beverage, I do not intend to argue the question, whether it ought entirely to supersede tea and coffee, among the adult members of our families, I might bring high authority against both the berry and the leaf. But allowing that persons of full age, or in the decline of life, who have always been indebted to China and St. Domingo for their most palatable drinks, may still continue to use tea and coffee with impunity, I am fully persuaded, that our children ought to grow up in the habit of total abstinence from them, as well as from all intoxicating beverages. They do not need them. The appetite does not naturally crave them. A tumbler of cold water, at breakfast and at tea, as well as at the dinner table, is better and sweeter—yes *sweeter* when the frost is spangled upon the windows, as well as when they are thrown open to woo the breezes of summer. I am convinced, that if children were encouraged to keep on the cold water level, for eight or ten of the first years, but few would call for any thing stronger, in after life.

What shall I say of tobacco? Pigtail, cigars, pipes, chewing, smoking, snuffing, spitting! If your children ever hanker after the vile weed, so as to form any of these slavish, disgusting habits, it will, in nine cases out of ten, be your own fault. If you cling, even stealthily to the loathesome worm-leaf, yourself, they will find it out, and you cannot expect to deter them, however gravely you may advise, or however loudly you may admonish them to abstain. But if you keep as clear of it, as almost every creeping thing does in the world; if you warn them against the filthy seduc-

tions of stripling smokers and chewers; if you take care to detect the first transgression and frown upon it, and if you take suitable pains to point out the inconvenience and dirtiness of the habit; to show how it leads to thirst and drunkenness; and how it wastes the health, by leeching off the fluids, which are essential to a sound and vigorous state of the body; there is but little danger, that your son will suffer himself to be "snared and taken." I am sorry to say, that we have the credit abroad, of being the greatest smokers on this side of the Turkish Divan, and of being the most inveterately addicted to spitting, of any people in the world. They love to tell a story of a gawky American, who calling at a gentleman's residence in London, was introduced by the servant into the parlor, upon the Brussels carpet of which, he soon discharged the secretions of his quid. The servant noticing it, instantly brought in a fine burnished spit-box, and placed it by his side. The stranger pushed it away with his foot, and again squirted the brown saliva from one corner of his mouth upon the carpet. The servant moved up the spit-box directly before him and still nearer; whereupon our Jonathan kicked it half across the room, exclaiming at the same time, "If you don't take that are plaguy thing away, I'll spit in it."

As for diet, children ought on every account to be early accustomed to that which is very plain. It is vastly more for their present health and comfort, than those little nice things, with which fond parents are so apt to vitiate their appetites; and it will save them a great deal of mortification in after life. If you make it a point, to give them the best of everything; to pamper them with rich cakes, and sweet-meats, and sugar-plums; if you allow them to say, with a scowl,

"I don't like this, and I can't eat that," and then go away and make them a little toast, or kill a chicken for their dainty palates, depend upon it you are doing them a great injury ; not only on the score of denying them a full muscle and a rosy cheek ; but of forming one of the most inconvenient habits, that they can carry along with them into after life. Better, far, to put them upon water gruel, or brown bread, till their appetite comes, and they can be satisfied with such food as others eat at the same table. If you learn your children to "eat what is set before them asking no questions," they will always find something, among whatever class of people they may afterwards be thrown, upon which they can make a comfortable meal ; whereas, if you allow them to mince and find fault at your own table, when they come to leave you, they will not, half the time, find anything they can eat, and thus you will prepare them to go chafing and grumbling along through life, the veriest slaves, in the world.

In regard to lodging, if you inure your child from his infancy, to sleep on a hard bed, and away from the fire, where the blankets are sometimes well frosted in the morning, he will not only be a stouter and more hardy boy, but will learn to like his straw, or moss couch, better than any other. Of course, when he goes abroad, and meets with the most indifferent accommodations, it will give him no trouble. He will throw himself down wherever night happens to overtake him, and sleep far more soundly than the young heir apparent does in the palace. And as he advances in life, it being always more agreeable to rise, than to fall, he will, if he chooses to make any change, find it much easier to go from a hard bed to a soft one, than he would to exchange his live feathers for the hard

lodging of a sailor or a soldier. On the other hand, the longer you indulge your dear little one upon his downy pillow, the more reluctant will he be to leave it; and the more will he suffer, whenever he finds a couch that is not so soft, whether among friends or strangers; and especially, when as the case may be, his altered circumstances compel him to change the luxurious habit which he had formed in his childhood. That is a very sensible remark of Dr. Paley, that "the art in which the secret of human happiness consists, is to set the *habits* in such a manner, that every change may be a change for the better."

You will observe some children, in families where you visit, if not in your own, that are never ready to go at the first bidding. They must be requested or commanded to do some little thing twice, perhaps three or four times, before they can be induced to move. They do not mean to break the fifth commandment, but on the contrary, to honor and obey their parents in all things. They are not quite ready, however, and they are sure it makes no difference, whether they go this minute or the next. They want to read to the next paragraph, or to hear a story through, or to warm themselves a little longer, or to be indulged in some other equally frivolous excuse for lingering. Now this is a very bad habit, which ought never to be winked at, and which indeed is never formed, but under mistaken parental indulgence. If your child does not hear and obey you the first time, how can you be sure that he will the second, or even the third, unless the loud and altered tone of your voice should convince him, that you are quite out of patience, and that it will not do to linger any longer? How often do children, when they have no thought of disobeying, wait

till the *chore* is forgotten, or the parent is obliged to do it himself, of which, however, he has no right to complain, as it is his own fault. But the injury to *them* is very great, in thus early allowing them to form habits of procrastination, which they will be very apt to carry along with them through life; and which, I need not say, will be extremely inconvenient both to themselves and their friends. "Samuel, my son, such a thing is wanted, will you attend to it?" "Yes sir,"—and then reads on. "Samuel, did you hear me? The fire is getting low, or your mother wants your assistance." Still the boy is not *quite* ready to start. Then *start* him, and in such a way that he will not hereafter mistake the *tenses*; and he will thank you for it as long as he lives.

So when you send your children upon errands, or permit them to visit their little playmates, and fix the hour for their return, it is vastly important that you strenuously insist upon punctuality; not because their time is so valuable, for it may be worth very little, or nothing to you, after they come back. But aside from your own convenience, in knowing that the errand is done, and where your children are when out of your sight, the habit of adhering to the letter of your instructions, is so essential to their future usefulness and well being, that parental laxity on this point, may be followed, and I have no doubt often is, by irreparable losses of property, if not of character. The child may plead that he was urged to overstay his time, or to go off somewhere else to play, and that he was sure you would have given him leave, had you been there; and it may all be very true—but beware how you listen to such excuses. They go to sap the foundation of your authority, at the same time that he is forming a habit so mischievous to himself.

Children are scarcely more prone to "go astray as soon as they be born," than they are to leave their toys in the middle of the floor, and as they grow older, to throw down their books, hats, bonnets, cloaks, &c. just where they happen to be—to strew their apparel about their sleeping rooms, as if the witches had been there half the night; and to put everything out of place, wherever you can trace their meddling fingers. How necessary is it, therefore, that you should take them in the gristle, if you would save *yourselves* infinite trouble, and *them* the manifold evils of these slovenly habits. It is greatly owing, I have no doubt, to the neglect of parents in this particular, that so many boys, when they go from home to school, need one or two servants apiece to keep track of their shoes and stockings; and that when their mothers and sisters come to visit them afterward in College, it is so difficult to thread their way up to the fire-place, owing to the "permutation and combination" of old boots, hats, coats, inexpressibles, apple cores, walnut shells, &c. which in all the changes of a week, or a month, experience no disturbance from Connecticut river broom corn or English bristles.

This leads me to remark, that however clean and tidy some few children may be, without much motherly oversight, these are only the exceptions. Dreadful as the *hydrophobia* is, a vast many children have it in the nursery, and it is hard to cure them, though for the most part they live along strangely. What they do not eat of their "peck of dirt," they contrive to carry to school upon their hands and faces, more especially the latter, along with their satchels, to the no small inconvenience of the master, when he has to leave off mending pens and "putting out words," to scour

them in the snow drift, or hail bank, (the latter is always the best when it can be got at,) as I recollect sometimes to have done in my early school-keeping days, when other remedies proved ineffectual. As physiologists tell us, that the whole substance of the human body is shed and reproduced several times in the course of life, I do not suppose that a boy will necessarily carry his dingy cuticle very high up into his teens, even though as my grandmother used to express it, the dirt should be *ground in*; but it is past all doubt, that if children are allowed early to contract the habit of neglecting their persons, as their hair, and hands, and faces, they will either be slovens and slatterns through life, or be put to a good deal of trouble in changing the habit.

Although there are many greater calamities, there is hardly anything more annoying, or *fretting*, in our cold climate, than to have the doors left open all over the house, as fast as you can shut them; but this you must submit to, and *shiver* under, without you take special pains to create a *bran-new* habit, in your rising families. Reed, Brown and Stewart, and I know not how many other philosophers, tell us about certain *first*, or *primary* truths. Whether our children have all these in their mental constitution, or not, one thing is certain, that while the phrenological faculty of *opening* is very large, and very early developed, they have no *natural* faculty of *shutting* anything at all. As I said before, you must *create* it, wherever you can find a place in the cranium which is not pre-occupied. A child no more thinks of closing a door after him, without being *educated* to it, than of keeping his mouth shut while older people are talking, or of doing the sexton's duty on the Sabbath. But on this branch of

domestic education, I have only two or three simple rules to lay down.

1. When the child leaves the door of your sitting-room open, wait till he has got some distance on his way to school, or to play, and then call him back to shut it. Try the experiment for a fortnight, taking care never to let him escape you, and see how it works.

2. If it fails, let him stand in the current of cold air, (the outer door being left open, so much the better,) first, five minutes, then ten minutes, then fifteen, and so on, till you have fairly tried the efficacy of the air-bath for his cure.

3. And lastly, if this does not do, wait in a bitter cold night, till he just begins to get warm in bed, and then call him down to shut the door after him. Next, wait till he is sound asleep, and then wake him and bring him down, as before. By this time, it is probable that the bump of *opening* will be considerably reduced, and that the *shutting* faculty will begin to show itself.

It is one of the great misfortunes of an only child, that almost everything in his circumstances, is calculated to make him selfish, rather than generous. When his father brings home a new-year's present, it is for him alone. When his mother prepares something nice and delicate, it is all for him. He has no one to whom he can offer half his nuts and apples and cake and sugar candy. And thus keeping all to himself, there is very great danger that he will come to feel as if he was entitled to the best of everything, and that whatever self-denial other children may be required to exercise, he is fortunately placed above it all. To counteract this ruinous tendency, parents who can afford it,

sometimes have recourse to adoption, or to what, for the time being, is equivalent to it. They bring in another child of about the same age, and place him on the same level with their own, that he may *give* as well as *receive*, and grow up in the habit of seeing and feeling that the little world in which he was born, was not made for him exclusively. When this cannot be done, it becomes the parents of an only child to teach him the same lesson in some other way—as by inducing him to divide his good things with other children, when they come to see him; to carry some of them to the sick and the poor, and by various other methods which will occur to every intelligent and judicious parent.

Where, as is commonly the case, there is more than one child in a family, while it is easier to guard against the selfish propensity to which I have just alluded, it is still more important, in proportion to the number. Supreme selfishness being one of the most pervading and acting elements of our fallen nature, it demands all the counteraction that it can possibly receive in the nursery, and by the early formation of the contrary habit. While the rights of property should be respected there, as well as elsewhere, else, as soon as ever you find one of your children grasping at more than his share, or inordinately attached to some favorite toy, it is time to interfere—but so gently, if possible, as to make the embryo miser feel happy in relinquishing his inordinate claims, and even giving up the very thing to which his little heart most fondly clings. If you can persuade him to give the glittering plaything, or whatever it may be, to his brother or sister, you will accomplish a great object, and he will always love you the better. By pursuing this course, you will soon habituate your children to feel that they live not for

themselves, but for each other ; they will find more happiness in giving than in receiving ; and the habit once formed, who can tell how much it will contribute to whatever is generous, and self-denying, and lovely in after life !

Man is by nature a lazy animal—" as lazy," according to the saying of a shrewd observer, " as he can be." He brings into the world with him an innate hatred of work. A master of the passions may easily rouse him to action, and induce him, under the temporary excitement, to put forth all his strength with prodigious effect. But to bring him to anything like *persevering* and *productive* labor, is an infinitely more difficult task. Among savage nations, industry in the proper meaning of the term, is entirely unknown. They hunt and fish, and surfeit, and fast, and sleep, and go to war, but will not betake themselves to any regular employment, either of body or mind. Hence famine often sweeps them off by thousands, even upon their deep alluvial bottoms, the rudest cultivation of which would load their tables with plenty.

Thus it is with our children. Though active and playful, they are averse to everything like patient and steady employment. They will not, when they arrive at the proper age, if left to themselves, go into the field, or the shop, or the factory, or the counting-house, and put their hands to the plow, or the saw, the loom, or the pen. And they are, for the most part, quite as averse to the confinement and study of the school-room, as to the implements of the farm or the tools of the shop. They want their liberty. It is irksome to be *confined* from day to day and from week to week to anything. And what is the sure consequence of indulging them and leaving them to grow up like the

"wild ass's colt?" It were no hyperbole to affirm, that thousands of sprightly and promising lads have been ruined just in this way. They have been indulged in their mortal antipathy both to work and study; and by running at large, have run into temptations and fallen into habits from which no human skill could deliver them. Our children *must* have employment—*must* be brought up in habits of industry. It is sinful, it is cruel to neglect this essential branch of their education. Make all the use you can of persuasion and example, and when these fail interpose your *authority*. If your son cannot be induced to do one thing, it may be judicious to let him choose some other trade or employment; but never carry your indulgence any further. If he will not study, put him on to a farm, or send him into the shop, or in some other way provide regular employment for him. Insist upon his doing *something*. This is the only way to guard his virtue and make him a useful member of society.

Dr. Paley very properly and forcibly remarks, in his chapter on the duty of parents, that "some such preparation is necessary for children of all conditions, because without it they must be miserable, and probably will be vicious when they grow up, either from want of the means of subsistence, or from want of rational and inoffensive occupation. To send an uneducated child into the world, is little better than to turn out a mad dog or a wild beast into the streets."

This view of the subject strongly condemns parents in the lower and middling classes, "who do not inure their children betimes to labor and restraint, by providing them with apprenticeships, services, or other regular employments, but who suffer them to waste their youth in idleness and vagrancy; for the consequence

of having thus tasted the sweets of natural liberty at an age when their passion and relish for it are the highest, is, that they become incapable for the rest of their lives, of continued industry, or of persevering attention to anything. And the man of fortune who permits his son to consume the season of education in hunting, shooting, or in frequenting horse-races, &c., defrauds the community of a benefactor and bequeaths them a nuisance."

I will only add, that so much stress did the Athenians lay on this matter, that the court of Areopagus was empowered to inquire minutely into the private life and conduct of every citizen, the profession he followed, and the manner in which he spent his time, and to punish delinquency. And one of the most remarkable laws of the Egyptians was that of Amasis, which ordained every individual to appear annually before a particular magistrate, and give an account of his profession and the manner in which he acquired his subsistence. Under this law it was highly penal for any one not to be able to show that he procured his living by honest means.

CHAPTER IX.

Religious Education :—Paramount importance of it—Great encouragement to faithfulness—Consists of two branches—Precept—Example—Children to be regarded and treated as depraved and alienated from God—Great use to be made of the Scriptures.

“And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”—*Deut. vi. 6, 7.*

“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”—*Prov. xxii. 6.*

THIS is a branch of domestic education, which throws all the preceding, important as they are, quite into the shade. Comparatively considered, it bears the same relation to other branches, as all “things seen and temporal do, to those which are unseen and eternal.” It would be extremely difficult, as I have endeavored already to show, to set too high a value upon physical and intellectual culture in early life. It would be idle to look for the finest specimens of agility, strength, hardihood and symmetry, without the former; or of great mental power and maturity without the latter. But then of what avail would it be, were such a thing possible, to train up a whole race of giants, both in stature and intellect, without at the same time using the necessary means to bring these mighty energies under the control of conscience and the word of God?

Of what *avail* did I say? Who does not know that the elements of brute force, organized by intelligence, without the guards of moral principle, and lashed into fury by the hurricane of passion, are infinitely more terrible than the ravages of fire or flood—than the blast of the desert or the rocking of the earthquake. So that even if human existence was bounded by the present world; if death was an eternal sleep, the humanizing conservative, *governing* power of religion, would be essential, I will not say to the highest perfection and happiness of the species, merely, but to the very existence of any tolerable state of human society.

I do not say, in the fashionable phrase, that "man is a religious animal," because, in the first place, I consider it extremely incorrect and derogatory, when speaking of his religious susceptibilities, to call him an *animal*; and in the next place, because it seems to imply, that he is naturally inclined to know, to serve and glorify the one living and true God, which I am sure is not the case. But although directly the contrary is true, to wit, that men "do not like to retain God in their knowledge," but at the earliest period of life become "vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart is darkened," still, children are capable not only of receiving and retaining religious impressions at a very tender age, but of experiencing "the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." With me, it admits not of a doubt, that if parents could be brought to act up to the spirit of the passages which I have quoted in the commencement of this chapter from Moses and Solomon, many more of their children would be converted to God in childhood and early youth, than are now during their whole lives, "transformed into his image."

X

But what is *religious* education? Is it strictly watching over the morals of your children and keeping them from quarreling, swearing, lying, pilfering, cheating, drinking and gaming? Is it guarding them against the thousand temptations to which they are exposed, and training them up in all good moral habits, so as to make them honest, respectable and useful members of society? These questions will best be answered by asking another,—*What is religion?* Does it consist essentially and radically in a round of moral duties, or in the principle from which they proceed? Is it temperance, and truth, and integrity, and alms-giving, and amiability in all the relations of life, or is it love to God and love to man, flowing out as a stream from the fountain, and dividing itself into a thousand beautiful and refreshing little branches? The gospel is decisive on this point. “A good man out of the *good treasure of his heart* bringeth forth that which is good.” True religion is both internal and external. A correct definition of it includes the heart, the affections and the temper, together with all the outward manifestations of internal piety and benevolence. Or in other words, a truly religious person is so, both in heart and life. There may indeed be outward morality, where there is no internal holy principle of action—“the form of godliness,” without the power. But the converse will not hold true. There cannot be piety in the heart, without its manifesting itself in the life. A good tree *will bring forth* good fruit. “Whosoever,” saith our Savior, “drinketh of the water that I shall give him, it shall be in him a well of water, *springing up* into everlasting life.” It is a living, overflowing fountain, and not a stagnant pool.

That, and that alone, therefore, can with propriety

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be called a religious education, which aims to bring the heart and conscience of the child under the supreme control of the Bible—to lead him to believe all the truths which it contains, and practice all the duties which it inculcates. You may adopt as strict a standard of ethics as you will, and you may teach it to your children with unwearied assiduity, and you may call it a *religious* education; but if this is all, if you go no deeper, it is a misnomer. It is for the want of attention to this point, that many parents, I fear, deceive themselves. They think they have done all their duty when they have left the most important part undone. They have been cultivating the branches and neglecting the root—taking a vast deal of pains to make their children good *citizens*, but very little, if any, to make them good *Christians*. This is a fundamental oversight; perhaps I ought to use a stronger term and say, that it is a fundamental *error*—for if not corrected, it may prove fatal. The only true and safe course is, to teach our children to “fear God, as well as to keep his commandments.” This is to be done in two ways—by *precept* and by *example*.

First, by precept. “Thou shalt *talk* to them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” I am aware, that had the great Jewish Lawgiver lived in this boasted age, he would have been met in *limine* with the objection, that in giving such a charge to heads of families, he was virtually encroaching upon the sacred and inalienable rights of children. We are told that the young ought to be left perfectly free to examine and decide for themselves on the all-important subject of religion—that this is the surest of all methods to form manliness and independence of

religious character, and that to pre-occupy their tender minds in the nursery with the hymns and catechisms, and sectarian dogmas, is to abridge the freedom of thought, and even of choice, to make them bigots, rather than liberal and enlightened Christians. Now that our children should be taught ultimately to examine and decide for themselves, no one will dispute. It is their right and their duty, as soon as they are old enough, to "prove all things and hold fast that which is good." But these very sticklers for free inquiry and juvenile independence, in matters of religion, violate their own rules continually, in things of infinitely less concernment. They do not think it safe, nor right, to allow their little ones to follow their own judgment and inclinations for a single day, in regard to what they shall eat and what they shall drink; where they shall go, and what hazards of life and health they shall run. They would pronounce any parent mad, who should act upon such a principle, and for the best of all reasons. Young children have no experience. They do not know how to take care of themselves. Which of all their toys would they not exchange for the glittering blade of a razor? What their appetites most keenly crave may be extremely prejudicial to their health, if it is not rank poison. Leave them alone only for a few moments in the house, and they are liable to fall into the fire. Let them go out alone, and what is to protect them from a thousand dangers? Now if it is no invasion of their natural rights, to restrain and guide them; to give them one kind of fruit and withhold another; to let them eat sweet flag and to warn them against the deadly hemlock; and in one word, to take care of them till they are capable of taking care of themselves, then

it is no infringement of their religious right, to pre-occupy their tender minds with pious instruction; to teach them what is true, and what is false; what is right, and what is wrong; what God requires, and what he forbids. This is nothing more nor less, than "bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," feeding them first "with milk and then with meat," as they are able to bear it, and throwing them ultimately upon their own responsibility, that their "faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

Besides, it is perfectly idle to talk about leaving children to choose their own religion, free from all early biases, one way or the other. It is just as impossible, as it is to keep them from contact with the material world, or to guard all the finer inlets of sensation, against every bias and every preference. Our children are creatures of sympathy, of imitation, of emotion, of passion, and strong moral and religious sensibilities, which we cannot keep in a dormant state if we would. They scarcely open their eyes upon the light of life, before their characters begin to form. We can leave the twig without a touch in the *right* direction, but if we do, we cannot hinder its being bent the *wrong* way. We can very gravely resolve, that we will sow no wheat in the field, lest we should interfere with the spontaneity of nature, but we cannot prevent the "enemy from sowing tares."

Were our children born in the image of God; were all their moral propensities from the first, perfectly holy; or were they alike indifferent to good and to evil; no more inclined to go wrong than right, to depart from God than to serve him; and were there no bad examples, no temptations in the world, the case

would be very different. They might then, perhaps, be safely "left to walk in the way of their own hearts." And this state of innocence at least, if not of positive holiness, is what many parents seem to take for granted—otherwise they could never think it safe to trust them without the molding hand of religious education. But alas, alas, much as we love them; dear to us as our own souls though they be, they are nevertheless "the degenerate plants of a strange vine." "They go astray as soon as they are born." If a course of religious education is not very early and assiduously commenced, other and hostile influences will gain the ascendancy, and then there will be but little hope of bringing them back to "the paths of life."

Man must be regarded and treated as a fallen creature, as prone to evil and not to good, from the commencement of his being. All the little avenues that open into the "broad way, which leadeth to destruction," must be carefully guarded; religious instruction must be commenced as early as possible; "line must be upon line and precept upon precept," all the means which God has appointed must be faithfully used, with a humble reliance upon his blessing, and this is what I understand by "training up a child in the way he should go," to which the promise is annexed, that "when he is old, he will not depart from it." The infant mind may be likened to a garden, when the spring is first heralded by the sweet notes of the bluebird and the robin. Then is the time for turning up the soil, and casting in the seed. You may neglect both, if you will, under the notion, that it is scarcely treating the mind fairly, to pre-occupy the ground with vegetables of your own choice, however wholesome or nutritious, or after the good seed is planted, you may

leave it to take its chance with twitch-grass, pig-weed, cut-worms and yellow-bugs ; but if you do, you will, as the season advances, find the whole product "nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned." Beware, lest by your neglect, you treasure up against a future day, remorse like that which must have wrung the hearts of the parents of the young man, an account of whose melancholy death, I here subjoin.

Sometime ago, a vessel wrecked in the pass from Scotland to London, had on board a youth who was the son of professing christians. They anxiously awaited his arrival, instead of coming, they received the melancholy intelligence, of his death. To some questions, put by them to the surviving mate, as to whether he spoke of them and what were his feelings in the prospect of death, they received the following heart-rending account. During five hours of suspense, before we were dashed upon the rocks, all he exclaimed was, "O cruel parents, you have brought me up for the present life, but said nothing to me about eternity?"

If in all the duties of life, "wisdom is profitable to direct," it is pre-eminently so in this most difficult and important branch of domestic education. The bringing up of our children, "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," involves so many of the most precious interests of time, as well as the infinitely higher interests of eternity, and requires so much self-consistency, so much discretion, so much watchfulness and perseverance, adorned with piety so ardent, so cheerful and so winning, that any parent may well exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things?" At the same time, how encouraging the promise, "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not."

In leaving his dying charge to parents, "These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them *diligently* unto thy children, the great Jewish Lawgiver placed religious education in the foreground of parental duties, and gave the Law of the Lord to heads of families, as the basis of all their instructions, "Thou shalt talk to them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." The meaning cannot be, that they should make religion the *exclusive* theme of conversation and instruction in their families, but that instead of being made a secondary object, or being introduced only on the Sabbath, and at their great religious festivals, it should be a familiar topic of discourse at all times; so that the rising generation should be in no more danger of forgetting the God of their fathers, or their duty to love and obey him, than of forgetting those who had literally "nourished and brought them up as children."

Now it will not be questioned, that religious education is as important in the year one thousand eight hundred and forty, after Christ, as it was in the year one thousand four hundred and fifty-one, before Christ; nor that Christian parents are as strongly obligated to train up their households in the fear of God, as Jewish parents were; nor that the former are as much bound to take the Old and New Testaments as the latter were, to take the Law of Moses for their text-book. The Bible is the Christian father's and mother's oracle. In all their religious teaching, the ultimate and authoritative appeal must be to the Scriptures. They may avail themselves of other helps. Many have written largely, and some have written ex-

remely well on this branch of domestic education ; and we are greatly in fault, if we do not profit by their suggestions. But there is no book like the Word of God, to instruct and aid us in our duties to the " children whom he hath given us." Indeed, other books are of no authority whatever, on the great questions of morals and religion, any further than they are based upon the Bible, and coincide with it. They may be written with great ability, and be very correct as far as they go. But if they trip in their definitions of virtue and piety ; if they hold up superficial and inadequate views of human depravity ; if, in short, they do not come fully into the spirit of the sacred writers, in regard to the elementary principles of religious education, they are so far from being safe guides, or even helps to parents, that if followed, they will most surely lead them astray. Besides, while many heads of families have not the means of purchasing any of the standard works on Christian education, however correct or valuable they may be, the Bible, the only divine and unerring standard, is in the hands of all, or is always to be had, " without money and without price," by those, if any there are, who cannot purchase the invaluable treasure.

Of the paramount value of the Scriptures, considered simply as a family reading book, I have given my thoughts in another place. I shall now suppose the parent to take it up in his family, as the priceless revelation of the mind and will of God ; and not only to put it into the hands of his children, for " a light to their feet and a lamp to their path," but constantly to appeal to it, as the standard of truth and duty, in all his religious teaching. As in courts of civil and criminal jurisdiction, the duty of the judges is not to *make* the law, but to *expound* it, so it is with heads of fami-

lies. God is the supreme legislator. The Bible is our statute book. Whatever authority we rightfully exercise as parents, is a delegated authority. The legitimate province of our learning and skill is expository, and our duty lies in applying the law to the reason and the consciences of our children. In one respect, a Christian parent of the humblest pretensions, has a decided advantage over the highest judicial authority in the land. The law, by which *they* are bound to govern themselves, is more or less imperfect, as all human legislation must be; and it *maybe* essentially wrong in principle; but the "law of the Lord," which *he* is to expound and apply is perfect. It is not only technically clear and explicit, but morally and infallibly right.

To make my thoughts on this subject as familiar and practical as I can, let me clothe them in the language of advice, to the heads of a young and rising family. You wish to "train up your children, in the way in which they should go," and "your heart's desire and prayer to God for them is, that they might be saved." First, then, consider how great and difficult the task is, upon which you enter—how prone they are to go astray, and how many snares and temptations lie in their path. Next, look up to God in fervent prayer, for wisdom and grace; for the teaching of his Holy Spirit, and for his blessing upon all your endeavors. Then, as soon as ever your precious and immortal little charge becomes capable of direct religious instruction, bring out the Bible. "I have told you already," you will say, "of the great God who made you and me, and everything above us and around us—that he gives us all our good things—that though we cannot see him, he sees us every moment, as well in the dark night as in the sunshine; and that if we love him and mind what he says, he will love us and bless us. Now

this is God's book. He knew how much we should want it, and he gave it to us, to teach us a great many things, which we never should have found out in any other way. When I read the Bible to you, or when you read it to me, or alone, remember, that it is just as if God spoke to you, with his own mouth, for it is all from him. Now you see, it is a large book, and will take you a long time to read it through. It is worth more than all the other books in the world ; because God told Moses and other good men just what to write, and this is the only book which he has ever given us, or ever will."

" We have not time to read much of it now ; but let us open it, and as we turn over the leaves, I will just touch upon some things which God says. Here, in the very beginning, he tells us about the creation, how all things were made in six days, and man was created in his own image, that is, good and holy like himself. Then, very soon, he tells us how our first parents disobeyed him, and were turned out of the beautiful garden, and how all their children became wicked—then, how a long time after, he drowned all the world but one family—how wicked mankind became again after the flood—how God burnt up some of their cities with fire and brimstone—how he called Abraham, and loved Joseph, and sent his plagues upon Egypt, and led the children of Israel through sea and through the wilderness—how he wrote his law on two tables of stone at Mount Sinai, and rained down bread forty years from heaven to feed them—how he blessed them when they obeyed him, and how dreadfully he wasted them with his plagues when they would not keep his commandments—how many good kings and wicked kings reigned over them—what a magnificent temple they

built—how it was destroyed and how their enemies carried them away from their own country to die in hard bondage. This is the Old Testament.”

“Now let us turn over to the New. Here God tells us of much more wonderful things, than any which I have mentioned yet—how he sent down his own Son Jesus Christ from Heaven—how he was found at first a helpless babe in a manger—how he grew up—how he went about doing good—feeding the hungry, teaching the ignorant, healing the sick, opening the eyes of the blind, and raising the dead—how the Jews hated him and persecuted him and finally nailed him to a cross and left him to die there—how he rose from the dead and went back to heaven, and “ever liveth to make intercession.”

I do not suppose that you will follow this course *exactly*, when you first show the Bible to your children; but I am sure, that something like it is extremely well calculated to arrest their attention, excite their curiosity, and prepare the way for a profitable perusal of its divinely illuminated pages. What a field of instruction does it open for months, and even years, in the happy family circle. “Come my children,” you will say, “we have just been reading a very entertaining book, written by a wise and good man, but now let us hear what *God* says.” So you will then gather them about you, and go over the history of the creation, with suitable comments at one sitting—the temptation and fall of our parents at another—the general deluge at another—the building of Babel and the confusion of tongues at another, and so on, from week to week, and month to month, dividing the sacred narrative into short portions, so as never to fatigue your little auditors, till you have gone over all the more interesting parts of both Testaments, and the impression is indel-

ably made upon their minds, that they have all the while been listening to the voice of God, and not of a man. When you come to the Gospels, you cannot be too anxious to have them get right views of the character of Christ—of his life, and preaching, and miracles—of the great design of his coming into the world—of his dying for sinners, and of their *own* sinfulness and consequent need of his atoning blood. It does not admit of a doubt, that by the adoption and carrying out of a course of religious instruction something like this, children would treasure up a great amount of divine knowledge at a very tender age; that the foundation would be laid for daily appeals to the word of God on all the great moral questions that can arise in the course of their education, and that early conversions would be greatly multiplied. When we talk to our children of the being and attributes of God; of his power, of his love, of his anger, and teach them to pray to him, and to think of him as always present, they want to be referred to visible symbols of his power, and wisdom, and goodness. While, therefore, we point them to the heavens, the work of his fingers, the moon and stars which he hath ordained, if we can bring them to feel, (not *convince* them merely,) but bring them habitually to *feel*, that the Bible is as truly inspired, as the world was created, and that it is as much a symbol of his presence to us, as a pillar of a cloud and of fire was to the Israelites in the wilderness, we shall gain an advantage in their religious education which nothing else can ever afford us. It being once and forever settled, between the parent and his children, that there is a perfect standard of right and wrong always at hand, to which he can bring them, and from which there is no appeal, the work is half accomplished and what remains is comparatively easy.

CHAPTER X.

Religious Education.—The ten Commandments—The Golden Rule—Evangelical Catechism—Dr. Watts'—The Westminster Assembly's.

THE Bible is the universal family statute book. If, in the absence of the Scriptures, we might have been aided a little in educating our children, by the Law of Nature, so inadequate are its teachings and sanctions to the exigencies of an apostate race of beings—so dim is the twilight by which we must have read it, that at the very best we should have been left in great doubt and perplexity on the most momentous questions of parental duty. But with the “statutes of the Lord” in our hands, we have nothing to complain of, and indeed, nothing more to wish for. The *ten commandments*, had we nothing else, are worth infinitely more in a Christian family, than a thousand volumes of moral rules and essays would be, resting on mere human authority, though that were the highest authority in the world. The truth of this remark will be best illustrated by a few simple references to the two tables of the law.

For example,—your little son brings home and utters a profane expression, which he caught from the mouth of some wicked boy at school, or on the play ground, and you are equally astonished and shocked

to hear it. What now is your first duty? You can hardly hesitate a moment, for you have got the law of heaven upon your table. You direct the child to follow you at once into your room, and when you are alone, you reverently open the Bible before him. "My dear child, whose law is this?" "It is God's law." "What was that wicked word which you spoke just now, and where did you learn it?" No answer. "Come here, my son, and let us see what God says about swearing, in the third commandment. *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.* Now you have broken this commandment, and God is angry with you. I cannot bear to think of it; but what can I do, what can you do to obtain his pardon? Will he ever forgive you? O yes, he will, for the sake of Christ, if you sincerely repent—if you are heartily sorry for your sin, and are resolved never to take his name in vain any more. We must kneel down and pray for his forgiveness, and you must never let another such wicked word escape from your lips." There are not many children but would remember such a scene for years, and be very reluctant to pass through it a second time.

Take another case. It is the duty of "remembering the Sabbath day to keep it holy," which you wish to impress upon the mind of your child, in view of some recent transgression? Bring him directly to the divine standard—to the fourth section of the moral law. Open the Bible and let God speak to him. "You see, my child, this is God's day, and not yours. Now if you play, or stroll abroad over the fields and groves, or read books which would hardly be proper on any day of the week, you break God's holy law, and expose

yourself to a dreadful punishment. It may come in this world ; it certainly will in the next, except you repent." By thus holding the attention of your sons to the point, for a few moments, you will bring him to confess and to feel, that he has done wrong. And when he is again tempted to break the Sabbath, he will, as it were, hear the voice of God rebuking him, out of the Bible. This will, in all ordinary cases, do more to restrain him, than anything else. When you speak by your own authority, though he loves you, he knows that the command comes from a man : but when God speaks in his law, if you have taught him right, he feels that the question is settled forever. In the thoughtlessness of childhood, and urged on by temptation, he *may* fall into the same sin again ; but still, the voice will ring in his ears, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."

Again : has your child been guilty of willful *disobedience* ? Has he neglected to do what you required of him, or gone off and done something which you had expressly forbidden ? It may or may not be your duty to chastise him. This will depend upon the circumstances of the case. But whatever else you do, fail not to bring the fifth commandment to bear upon his conscience. "Here it is my dear child—*Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.* Now to disobey your parents, is to *dishonor* them. This you have done, and in doing it, you see you have broken God's holy law. We can forgive you, but that will not lessen your guilt, nor procure forgiveness from your heavenly Father. You must repent and do so no more." Appeals like these, solemnly reiterated, as occasion may require, will, by the blessing of God, do more to

establish your authority, than anything, yea, than everything which you can do besides.

So if your child has in an evil hour, and under strong temptation, been guilty of *pilfering*; as taking fruit from a garden or an orchard, without the knowledge or consent of the owner; it is infinitely important that he should be checked in the very beginning of a course which has brought thousands to punishment and ruin. In such a case, you can hardly make too serious a matter of the crime, nor spend too much time in imprinting the guilt upon his memory and his conscience. And here, as in all other cases, your main reliance must be upon the Bible. Especially must you solemnly arraign the culprit upon the eighth commandment. Taking the law of God in one hand, lead him by the other into a retired room, where you will be liable to no interruption. There lay open the statute and read, *Thou shalt not steal*. Explain its meaning in language which he can perfectly understand, and show him how he has violated it. The value of the property may have been very trifling, to be sure; but it was *thievishly* taken, and that is what constitutes the guilt, whether the article stolen be worth a cent, or a hundred dollars. However urgent your business may be, take time—take time *enough*—take as much as if you had *nothing else in the world to do*. Dwell upon the criminality of the act, as a sin against God, who saw it, and is always present. If it is not the first offence, and you feel constrained to punish the child, let him see that you do it with the greatest reluctance and sorrow; and before you dismiss him, while he kneels down by your side, intercede with God to bring him to repentance and forgive him.

Such is the use which we are bound to make of the

Moral Law, in the religious education of our children. Every duty which God requires, and every sin which they commit, falls under some one of the ten commandments; all of which ought to be early and indelibly committed to memory, by every child; and to be so familiarly appealed to by every parent, that the authority of the infinite Lawgiver may never, for an hour, be lost sight of.

But although the decalogue is a sort of epitome of the whole Bible, it is not to be taken as a substitute. Duties, temptations, motives to obedience, warnings, threatenings and promises, are presented in an infinite variety of aspects, throughout the Scriptures, to aid us in "bringing up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." But here I have room for only a few very brief references and illustrations.

You will be anxious, as a matter of course, to guard your children against all the blandishments of intemperance; and how can you so effectually enforce your exhortations, as by appealing to the word of God? Turn, for example, to the 23d chapter of Proverbs and read, while they listen:—*Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babblings? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine: they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, and when it giveth its color in the cups, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.* Other passages will readily occur to you, in which the guilt and awful doom of the intemperate are portrayed in the most appalling language. How can you spend an occasional half hour more profitably, than in reading and commenting upon such passages? Let me repeat a re-

mark here, which for substance has been made already—that there is nothing like *Thus saith the Lord*, to impress the minds of the young where they have been rightly trained, and to keep them “back from presumptuous sins.”

Perhaps there is no sin, to which children are so early and so strongly inclined as *falsehood*. The Psalmist seems to have had this ruinous propensity in his eye, when he said, “They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking *lies*.” Many Christian parents have been exceedingly tried on this point, and in some cases, have found it next to impossible, to break up the habit. Every one will feel, however, that it *must* be done, cost what it will. Perhaps there is no one fault of early childhood, which calls for the rod so often as this. But we have no reason to expect that the rod alone will cure it—nor that any representations we can make of the disgrace, and other temporal evils of *lying*, will be effectual. It must be treated as a sin against God, and a very great sin too. To show in what light he regards it, and how awfully he will punish it, must have recourse to the “Law and the testimony.” Perhaps this cannot be more effectually done than by putting the Bible into hands of the child, solemnly reminding him, that it is the word of God; and requiring him to read aloud such passages as the following: “Ye shall not steal nor *lie*, one to another.” “The mouth that speaketh *lies* shall be stopped.” “He that speaketh *lies* shall perish.” “*Lying* lips are an abomination to the Lord.” “A righteous man hateth *lies*; but a wicked man is loathsome and cometh to shame.” Especially and above all, that tremendous denunciation by the mouth of the Apostle John—“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and

murderers, and *all LIARS shall have their part in the lake, which burneth with fire and brimstone.*

I might go on to show how anger, pride, envy, and every evil passion, to which children are prone, should be rebuked, as it were out of "the mouth of the Lord," by direct and solemn appeals to his "lively oracles." But I hasten to glance at the inestimable value of "Our Savior's Golden Rule," in the religious education of a family. *All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you do ye even so to them.* The simplicity, brevity and comprehensiveness of this rule, have justly excited the admiration of the wise and good, in all ages. It is adapted to the tenderest, as well as the most mature capacities; and is applicable to every possible condition of human life. No man is above it and no child is below it. It is the very first moral rule, I believe, which children are capable of understanding, for the regulation of their own desires and actions. One child has two apples, and his little brother has none. Instead of requiring him to give up one of them, just bring him to the golden rule, which I shall suppose you have taught him to repeat, before he could speak plain: "What would you wish your brother to do if he had two apples and you had none?" He knows perfectly well, and cheerfully gives up one of them. Or, little A. has wrested a favorite whip or top from little B. because he was the strongest. "How is this," you will ask, "you know the top does not belong to you, but to your brother; and yet you have taken it away from him? Have you forgotten the *golden rule*? Had it been your top, and had he been the oldest and strongest boy, would you have been willing to have had him

erve you, as you have served him?" He is conscious that he should not; and it requires but little tact in the management of children, to make him confess it. Or, one child has got angry and struck another. He is called up. "Have you done as you would be done by? You have hurt him, and would you not have complained if he had struck you? Would you be willing now, to have him return the blow, and hurt you just as much?" He feels the force of the appeal; and if you make as serious a matter of it as you ought, he will not be likely to forget it. So in a thousand other cases, which actually arise in every young family. There is hardly a day in the whole year, but that a parent might bring up and apply the *golden rule*, to the greatest advantage. There is not a rising family in the land, in which it might not be made far more potent, than the severest pains and penalties by which many strive in vain to coerce the wills, and mold the characters of their children. But as I may have occasion again to revert to this topic, when I come to speak of the education of conscience, I shall pursue it no further at present.

The daily use of the Bible, in the religious education of children, need not exclude from the fire-side those admirable little *helps* called *catechisms*, which have always found a welcome in pious families. Indeed, even parent of high Biblical attainments could hardly do without them; so important is their helpfulness and guidance in the great majority of cases, that but few writers who have delighted and instructed mankind by the results of their studies, have conferred greater benefits upon the church, than the authors of condensed evangelical catechisms. It has ever appeared to me, that

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those persons who indulge themselves in the unqualified condemnation of creeds and catechisms, scarcely know "what they say, nor whereof they affirm." To place these human compends, on a level with the word of God, as articles of our own faith, or as materials for the instruction of our children, would certainly be wrong. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, are the only authoritative standard. Our ultimate appeal, in all cases, is to the Bible. Should any one offer us a compendium drawn up by the most learned and pious man, or body of men in the world, as equally binding upon our consciences, with the scriptures, it would be our duty to reject it. And as it is not supposable, that any human formula can be perfectly free from ambiguity and mistake, our only safety is, in habitual references to the Divine Standard, on every difficult point.

But to call upon us to throw away all creeds and catechisms, because they are not *inspired*, is like exhorting us to dismiss all our ministers, and live without *preaching*, because *they* are not inspired. And to be consistent, these ultra reformers ought, not only to discard every religious book, except the Bible from their families, but to put the Bible into the hands of their children, without one word of comment or explanation;—for surely they will not claim, that they themselves are any more *inspired* to expound the word of God, than were the authors of the Church Catechism, or the Assembly of Divines at Westminster. We respect our religious teachers, and look to them for instruction from the pulpit, and welcome them into our families, because we believe them to be honest and good men; and because their daily study of the Scriptures qualifies them, as pastors, to feed us and our

children "with knowledge and understanding." We do not look upon them as *infallible*, nor would they consent to be so regarded by any of their people. Hence their frequent exhortations, "search the Scriptures," study the Bible, that your "faith may not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God." And so with our catechisms.

Should it be said, that no confession of faith, or catechism, can be placed on the same ground as the Christian ministry, which exists and exercises its sacred functions, under a special divine appointment, my answer is, that these *helps* may nevertheless, not only be lawful, but exceedingly useful. Not to insist, as I might, that a creed, or a catechism, drawn up with great care by one or more men of eminent moral worth and distinguished Biblical learning, is quite as likely to be correct, as the weekly instructions of ordinary ministers, it is certainly very convenient, to have in our hands a condensed and connected abstract of sacred truth, for our own private use in studying the Scriptures, and to aid us in teaching our children. This last, is the proper use of family catechisms. We want them, not as substitutes for the Bible—not as of equal authority with the Sacred Records, nor in fact, as of any *independent authority* at all; but as little text-books, to assist our children in the study and better understanding of God's Holy Word.

What catechisms, then, are best adapted to family use? It is obvious, that very much depends upon a judicious selection, and every enlightened Christian parent will be guided in his choice, by a regard to correctness of sentiment, and adaptation to the age and capacities of his children. The infant's mind, as well as its body, requires more simple aliment, than it will

three, or four years later. The catechism, therefore, which the older children are learning and reciting, would be too heavy a tax, both upon its memory and its comprehension. Such an one as Dr. Watt's, for infant minds, is the best. But it is equally true on the other hand, though it is a truth often overlooked in this age of extreme simplification, (I was going to say of extreme *baby simplicity*,) that the first catechism in the nursery ought to be laid aside, as soon as the child becomes capable of comprehending more elevated thoughts and language. It may have been the fault of Christian parents, fifty or a hundred years ago, that their catechetical instructions were above the comprehension of their children, at the tenderest age : indeed, I believe it was ; but I am quite sure, that the prevailing fault of these times lies in the opposite extreme. The great anxiety to bring down every word and idea, to the level of infant minds, induces too many to keep everything still upon the same level, when the catechumens ought to be steadily rising, and to be furnished with the appropriate means of " increasing in the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent."

In calling the particular attention of heads of families, to that admirable compendium of Christian doctrine, the Westminster Shorter Catechism, I do not mean to speak disparagingly of the catechisms of those evangelical Christians, who dissent from some of its statements ; but only to express my own admiration of it, as the most lucid, guarded and comprehensive epitome of Bible truth, which I have ever seen ; and as in my judgment, the best family manual, that the wisdom and piety of any body of uninspired men, has ever yet given to the church. And however the advo-

cates of other creeds, may differ from me in opinion, I cannot well see how any of the enlightened members of that very large body of Christians, Presbyterian and Congregational, who embrace the Westminster Confession of Faith, can dissent. A brief reference to the history of the origin and adoption of our Shorter Catechism, will, if I do not greatly mistake, enhance its value in the estimation of pious and candid minds.

"It was felt," says Dr. Belfrage, in his Exposition of this unrivaled compend, "by the leading men in the struggle with superstition and arbitrary power, in the seventeenth century, that a scheme of doctrine, church government and worship, pure and scriptural, would be a most excellent means of establishing the rights for which they were contending, and forming the virtues by which freedom is blessed. It was with this view, that the Westminster Assembly was convened; and that its proceedings were honored with the countenance of the first and best men in the land—the first in influence, and the best in true worth." All parties are constrained in fairness and candor to admit, that this Assembly was composed of men of distinguished talents, learning, piety and ministerial abilities. Mr. Baxter, who knew the greater part of them well, says that the Christian world, since the days of the Apostles, never had a Synod of more excellent divines. The Assembly was convened in 1643, and was composed of *one hundred and twenty-one* divines, or presbyters, *thirty* lay assessors, and *five* commissioners from Scotland. It sat more than *five years and a half*. While the Confession of Faith was under discussion, it was reduced to the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, by able committees; and both these "*forms of sound words*" were, after careful examina-

tion, solemnly sanctioned by the Assembly. They were presented for approval to the House of Commons towards the close of 1647, and sanctioned by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1648.

Our Puritan ancestors brought the Shorter Catechism along with them across the ocean, and laid it on the same shelf with the family Bible. They taught it diligently to their children, every Sabbath day; and while *that* was to be read through in course, *this* was to be committed to memory, at a very early period of childhood. Within the last thirty years, the catechism has been gradually falling into neglect, and has been to a great extent displaced in pious families, by simpler, and in too many cases extremely superficial substitutes. The common objection is, not to the system of doctrines which it inculcates; but that they are above the comprehension of children at the tender age, when it used to be committed and recited. This objection proceeds upon the assumption, that it is no advantage to learn anything earlier than it can be fully understood. Is this a correct view of the matter?

Admitting for argument's sake, (and only for argument's sake,) that the Assembly's Catechism is quite above the capacities of a child, in his seventh or eighth year, is the time thrown away, which is requisite to commit and recite the whole correctly? Why may not the memory be exercised and improved in this way, as well as any other? Do you say, that the study is so extremely dry and uninteresting, as to prejudice the mind of the child, not only against the catechism, but against the truth itself? What then will you do with the alphabet? Nothing can be dryer, or more unintelligible to a child, than A. B. C.; and will you refrain from teaching it, for fear of prejudicing him

against the spelling-book, and making him hate learning as long as he lives? The elements and rules of grammar too,—how can your children ever become acquainted with them, if you are to teach nothing but what they can comprehend at the moment? What does the boy, who sits down and sweats and says over *hic, hæc, hoc*, know of the use and application of all this jabbering? And yet to think of making him a Latin scholar without these, to him unmeaning initiatory exercises, would be like attempting to learn him to swim, without ever taking him into the water.

In these and a hundred other cases which might be mentioned, the question is not whether our children perfectly comprehend their lessons at the time; but whether the subject is of sufficient importance to engage their attention; and whether what they are now treasuring up in their memories, will be of sufficient use hereafter, to pay for the time and trouble of the acquisition. Apply this test to the Shorter Catechism. Your objection to it is, that your children cannot understand it. But are the doctrines which it embraces, the true and fundamental doctrines of the gospel, and are they expressed in fewer and better words and definitions, than in any other summary with which you are acquainted? If this is your deliberate opinion, ought you not early to store the memories of your children with these precious truths, so that if when, as they advance towards maturity, their attention is arrested by the Spirit of God, they may have one of the richest treasures, that ever human wisdom and industry accumulated, to draw from? For myself, though I confess with shame, that when my mother used to give me my little task, and teach me *The chief end of man*, I would gladly have been excus-

ed from both, and wondered what good they could ever do me ; I subsequently found abundant cause to be thankful for her fidelity and perseverance. I was astonished when I began to read the Bible seriously, and to collect and arrange its doctrines, to find what a fund of definitions and important scriptural truths I had got treasured up for the occasion. This, I doubt not, accords with the experience of thousands, who like myself once loathed the Assembly's Catechism. And how delightful is it to hear, as we sometimes do, the aged disciple, just on the verge of heaven, repeating with thrilling interest, and feasting his soul upon the definitions of *justification*, *adoption*, *sanctification*, and the like, which three quarters of a century before were imprinted indelibly upon his memory in the nursery.

If then it were true, as some believe and object, that the Westminster Catechism is entirely above the comprehension of young children, a portion of their time might be most profitably employed in committing it to memory. But is it true ? Are not many of the questions so admirably and lucidly propounded and answered, as to make it easy for an intelligent Christian parent to explain, and bring them down to a very early comprehension ; and is it not better to leave something for the parent to do, and for the child to study and try to understand, than to excuse the one from all responsibility in teaching, and put off the other with those prepared dilutions and simplifications, which none but the merest infant can be kept upon, without great and lasting injury.

CHAPTER XI.

The Sabbath.—Its requirements to be enforced—Its prohibitions to be guarded—Children to be kept within doors—To attend public worship—To sit with their parents in the house of God—To be instructed in the family.

I HAVE already, in commenting upon the Decalogue, alluded to the Fourth Commandment, as the authoritative standard of appeal in our families, with regard to the observance and sanctification of the Sabbath. What then is the Sabbatical law, and how is it to be administered in the religious education of children? If, as has been often, and I am sure truly said, the Christian Sabbath is essential, not only to the prosperity of the church, but to the very existence of pure and undefiled religion, in the world, it follows as a matter of course, that children cannot be brought up in the fear of God, without its restraining and hallowed influences. They must not only be *taught*, but as far as parental authority can reach, be *required* to 'Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.' Parents are so far from having a right to put any secular labor upon them, on the Lord's day, that they are solemnly bound to keep them from it. The language of the command on this point, is too explicit to be misunderstood. "In it, thou shalt not do any work, *thou*, nor thy *son*, nor thy *daughter*; neither in the field, nor the shop, nor the ware-house, nor the factory, nor the mill—not to gather and secure the most

precious fruits of the earth, in the most critical season, even—for “in earing time and in harvest shall thou rest.” The parent who allows his sons to work under any circumstances on the Sabbath, sins most grievously, not only against God, but against them, likewise: for when they have once overleaped the sacred barrier, what shall hinder them from habitually trampling upon the divine institution, as they quicken their steps down the “broad way, which leadeth to destruction?”

But the spirit of the fourth commandment, goes much further than this. It “forbiddeth the omission or careless performance of the duties required, and the profaning the day by idleness, or doing that which is in itself sinful, or by unnecessary thoughts, words or works, about worldly employments and recreations.” We are bound, therefore, while we spend some part of every Lord’s day in teaching our children the great principles and duties of religion, to watch over them from morning till night—to know where they are and as far as practicable, how they are employed; and to restrain them from whatever is inconsistent with the design of the sacred institution. I know it is extremely difficult to arrest perpetual motion, in the nursery, even for a few minutes; and it seems as if some indulgence of locomotion, within restricted limits, ought to be granted to very young children. They cannot sit still all day, if they would. The ever sparkling spontaniety of nature, will assert its prerogative over their little frames. But then, I hold, that there ought to be a very great difference, even in the nursery, between the Sabbath and other days of the week. Children of two or three years old can be restrained, and it does them no hurt, to intermit their noisy frolicks

one day in seven. They enjoy themselves so much the more, when the restraint is taken off; and to be often called upon, when they are getting rude, to repeat that beautiful little couplet,—

“I must not work, I must not play,
Upon God’s holy Sabbath day,”

has a powerful tendency to imprint a sacredness upon their memories, which I believe is rarely, if ever obliterated.

As for the older children, they ought not only to be confined within doors, but to be kept still, and to be employed as much of the time as they can be, without real weariness, in reading the Bible and other suitable religious books, and in receiving oral instruction. If you *give them an inch, they will take an ell*. If you allow them to go out in the morning or after the public exercises of the day to *walk*, they will *play*, or at any rate, it will be setting a bad example to other children in the neighborhood. If you permit them to spend much time in the garden, they will, in one way or another take liberties, which if you saw them, you could not but disapprove. If you send your boys off a mile or two, on Sabbath morning, to salt your sheep or young cattle, you must not expect that they will think there can be any harm in stopping to pick berries, or in amusing themselves with other boys, whom they may happen to meet on the way; and if they should rob orchards and do other mischief, how can you wonder at it?

It may be a question with some parents, how early it is best to take their children along with them to the house of God. I would not advise them, habitually to carry their infants in their arms “to meeting,” because it can be of no possible advantage to the children,

and may give much disturbance to the congregation. At the same time, I never could find it in my heart to chide a pious mother, who, hungering for the bread of life, comes occasionally with her babe, because there is no one with whom she can safely leave it at home. Much, however, will depend upon the habits and circumstances of the people. In many places it can scarcely be done at all. But if I were settled over a very poor and sparse congregation, or if I were a missionary in one of our new settlements, I am sure I should rather see mothers with their babes in the place of worship, than not to have them come at all.

That it is the duty of parents, to lead their little ones up to the courts of the Lord, as early as they can be kept still during the exercises, and before they can understand what they hear, I think every one who looks at the subject candidly must admit. The utmost that any child should be able in after life to do, is just to remember the first time, when first he went with his mother to the house of God, and looked up with wonder at the preacher, and listened with mute astonishment to the songs of Zion. The habit of attending public worship on the Lord's day cannot be formed too early; and when thus formed, it exerts a powerful influence upon the future character, and in a multitude of cases, I doubt not, upon the eternal destiny of the child. In every house of worship parents and children ought to be seated together. Strongly as I confess myself to be attached to a great many of the notions and fashions of our Puritan fathers their fashion of *building* and *seating* their "meeting houses," I never could, (since I was a boy myself,) away with. It is difficult to conceive of a more objectionable arrangement, than that of seating the parents be-

low and sending the children up gallery, to select their associates, and laugh and play, with the trifling interruption of hearing a rap or feeling a shake, now and then, from the *tything-man*. And then, the construction of the old meeting houses—how could human ingenuity have contrived anything worse? Not to mention the great difficulty both of speaking and hearing, what shall we say of those high square pens, in the galleries, some of which “remain, (or rather the ruins of them,) unto this day,” and which would seem to have been designed expressly as hiding places for all the bad boys in the parish. Surely, there is nothing so becoming, so orderly, so *beautiful*, as to see whole families sitting together “in heavenly places,” and listening, with fixed attention, to the words of eternal life.

’Tis pleasant as the morning dews,
That fall on Zion’s hill,
Where God his mildest glory shows,
And makes his grace distil.

Let me add, that in country parishes, Christian parents cannot be too strenuous and vigilant with their children, between the forenoon and afternoon services. The habit which extensively prevails, of allowing them to *stay* during the intermission, or to wander about the vicinity, amid all the exposures of “evil communications,” is exceedingly dangerous. Thoughtless boys, associating together, will tempt and corrupt each other on the Sabbath, as well as on any other day of the week. How often do we hear the complaint, from those who live near our houses of worship, that their orchards, and even their gardens are robbed, almost as regularly as the Sabbath returns. I have no doubt, that many a boy enters upon a course of Sunday pilfering, through the neglect of parents, in the way just specified, which puts him upon the high

road to the State's prison. If you cannot remain with your children, or put them under the care of some pious Sabbath-school teacher, by all means require them to go home in the intermission.

Having in the last chapter laid so much stress upon the duty and importance of faithful *catechising*, I need not introduce the subject again in this place. But there is one excellent practice of former times, which I fear is falling more and more into neglect, even in pious families. Our fathers and mothers used to make a point of questioning their children upon the sermons, "after meeting," in order to find out what they recollected, to quicken and improve their memories, and by a concise repetition of the most important truths, to impress them more deeply upon their consciences. This habit is of great advantage to parents as well as children; and by persevering in it, almost any parent will find himself able to conduct the exercise with a good degree of ease and advantage. Ours is an age of more *hearing*, than *thinking*, *remembering* or *digesting*. Too many, who feel as if they could hardly live without three sermons a day, greatly neglect the religious instruction of their families at home, and excuse themselves by the plea, that they have no time, or that they are too much fatigued with hearing, to do anything else. This is permitting one duty to crowd out another; or rather, it is, except in extraordinary cases, hearing *one* sermon too much, for their own profit, to the neglect of those fire-side duties which by the blessing of God would be of the highest advantage to their children.

CHAPTER XII.

Education of conscience :—Definitions—Sometimes perverted—The power of education over it—The process to be early commenced—Line must be upon line and precept upon precept—The Bible the only infallible standard of appeal.

WHAT is conscience? Is it a single, or a complex faculty of the mind? Are its decisions fallible or infallible? Is it improvable or unimprovable? These questions have been differently answered by writers of eminence and authority, in the several departments of intellectual, moral and Christian philosophy. One defines conscience to be, "that faculty by which we discern the moral quality of actions, and by which we are capable of certain affections in respect to this quality." Another, "the judgment which a man passes upon the morality of his actions, as to their purity or turpitude." Another, "the principle in man, by which he approves or disapproves of his heart, temper and actions." Another, "the exercise of the judgment in the particular department of morals." Another, "the susceptibility of experiencing those emotions of approbation or of disapprobation and condemnation, which are awakened by the retrospect of the moral demerit, or the moral excellence of our own conduct." And another calls it, a *double*, or *joint knowledge*, namely, one of a divine law, or rule, and the other of a man's own action. But whatever trifling or more obvious discrepancies there may be between some of

these definitions, they all agree in this, that there is *something* in man, however it may be defined, or by whatever name it may be called, which bears inward testimony to the good or the evil, the right or the wrong of our thoughts, words and actions; and that this is one of the original and essential attributes of the human soul.

The conscience is *congenital*, in the same sense as reason and memory are so. Our children are *born* with it. A child without a conscience, would be a *non compos* in regard to moral responsibility, as truly as an idiot is *non compos mentis*. We should have nothing to appeal to. We might tell him that one action or motive is right, and another is wrong; but it would be impossible ever to make him see or feel the distinction. As well might you attempt to convey correct notions of color to a child without eyes, or of sound to one destitute of the organ of hearing. In the whole business of religious education, our sole reliance under God, must be upon the power and fidelity of conscience. We cannot begin, and after we have commenced, we cannot take one successful step without it.

It may be said, and has been said, that if conscience is a right moral judgment, enstamped as it were upon the human soul, all its decisions must of course be right, so that it never can need the aid of *education* to form and enlighten it. How this might have been had sin never entered the world, I need not stop to inquire. But in everything we do for our children, we must take them as they are, and not as they might have been, had the moral image of God, in which man was created, never been defaced. No point is better settled by Scripture, observation and experience, than

that the conscience is liable to be blinded, perverted, and even *silenced*, by "an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." The apostle Paul tells us, that "unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure," but even their mind and their *conscience* is defiled! And "the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their *conscience* seared with a hot iron!" Nothing is clearer, than that Paul himself before his conversion, was urged on, even to deeds of cruelty and blood, by a blinded and bigotted conscience. Alluding to that part of his life, as well as to the course which he had pursued subsequently to his conversion, he solemnly declared before the Jewish counsel, "I have lived in all *good conscience* before God, unto this day." And on another occasion, "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth, which thing I also did." No one will say that he *ought* to have done anything against Jesus of Nazareth; and if not, then his conscience was dreadfully perverted, when he "shut up the saints in prison," and gave his voice against them at their martyrdom.

So of the Rev. John Newton, when after his conversion he continued for sometime in the slave trade. Most certainly he did it with the approbation of his conscience; but was it right? So also of many good men, who, twenty years ago manufactured and sold alcoholic poisons for family use. Surely they did not all of them violate the dictates of their consciences; but was it right? In fine, who is there that cannot recollect cases of conscientious wrong doing, or wrong

judging, which have fallen under his own observation? and how many do now most heartily condemn opinions and habits of their own, which their consciences once approved. How then, is it to be accounted for, that conscience is so uncertain a guide, and what can be done by parents to enlighten and keep it right, in their rising families? One of the great defects in domestic education is, either that the conscience is almost entirely neglected, or that it is perverted by erroneous training. Paul's conscience was erroneously educated. His parents ought to have understood, from the whole spirit and drift of the Jewish ritual, that it was "a shadow of good things to come;" and from the prophetic books of the Old Testament, that Jesus was the promised Messiah. In this belief they ought to have educated their son, from the tenderest age, and if they had, who can believe that he would ever have thought it his duty to persecute the Christians! It is more than probable, that under the tuition of his Pharisaic father, he imbibed that bigotted attachment to Judaism, which was afterwards greatly strengthened and confirmed in the school of Gamaliel; so that when he came upon the stage, his conscience was just prepared to second, or rather, I should say, to stimulate his ardent temperament in the mad career, which he afterwards so deeply deplored.

The power of education to mold the young and plastic conscience into whatever shape it pleases, is nowhere so strikingly manifested, perhaps, as in Catholic countries. I am quite sure there is nothing like it, (and it is a great reproach to us if I am correct;) but I am sure there is nothing like it in any Protestant state, with which I am acquainted. Go to France, go to Spain, go to Ireland, go to Lower Canada, and

mark the religious habits of the children in the family, in the school, in the humble church, and in the gorgeous cathedral, and you will say that you never saw so much apparent devotion and conscientiousness among our children, in the worship of the one living and true God, as those little creatures manifest in their crossings, their counting of beads, their kneeling before the images, praying to the Virgin Mary, and other religious observances to which they are accustomed from their infancy. You will tell me, perhaps, that this is not *religion*, but gross superstition and idolatry; and so we all believe. But it shows what early education can do to pervert and enslave the conscience, as well as to blind the understanding and debase the soul.

Now if so much can be done by a wrong education to mold the conscience into the most destructive forms of error, what Christian parent will permit himself to doubt, that by God's help he can do as much, at least, to mold it after the model of the gospel? Do you ask when and how you ought to begin, and how to proceed step by step, in this important undertaking? It seems to me, that the proper course is a very plain one. Here is the child "which God hath given you," and it is now old enough to "know good and evil." You find by various trials, that the dear little boy begins to understand the difference between right and wrong, and that you can influence him by simple statements and short arguments, to "choose the good and refuse the evil." This is nothing more nor less than appealing to his little conscience. Here you begin, and you proceed from day to day, from week to week, and from year to year, just as you have begun. Whenever the great questions of right and wrong, of duty and self-denial come up, (and they will be continually coming

up, in one form or another,) you will tell the child you *ought* to do this, and you *ought* not to do that; and when he asks, *why*,—you will give him the reasons, and never leave him if you can help it, till he is fully convinced. In this way, you will keep his conscience all the while awake, all the while tender. Under such culture, the moral principle will be every day gaining strength, the habit of acting from reflection and not from impulse, will be gradually formed, and it will not be long before he will come to you of his own accord, and ask, is it right to do this, is it wrong to do that?—affording you just such opportunities as you want, to perfect this all-important branch of his education.

But here you need a perfect rule or standard, of right and wrong to aid you. You cannot get along without it; and it must be of high and divine authority, otherwise it cannot bind the conscience of your child. Such a rule the Lord of conscience has put into your hands. The Bible, the Bible! There is nothing like it. There is nothing second to it. By continually appealing to the Bible, you keep his conscience quick and enlightened. You accustom him to try his thoughts, words and actions, by the divine rule, till it grows into a confirmed moral habit, and the answer in the most perilous hour of temptation, drops spontaneously from his lips, “How shall I do this great thing, and sin against God?”

Now what treasure is it possible for a youth to possess, which can for one moment be compared with the value of a *well-educated conscience*? If we had the “wealth of Ormus,” what could we do for them—what to keep them “unspotted from the world”—what to shield them against temptation—what to make the pathway of life safe and pleasant—what to give them

a high character—what to fit them for usefulness here, and for “glory, and honor, and immortality” hereafter, like *educating their consciences*—like teaching them to “fear God and keep his commandments? If, when they go out from us they carry along with them consciences trained up to a vigorous maturity, under our prayers and instructions, it will be infinitely better for them than if we could make them “kings and princes in all the earth.” How much is that child to be pitied, who has no father or mother to educate his conscience; and how improbable is it, that being neglected in his childhood he will ever in after life, maintain a conscience void of offence, both towards God and towards man.

CHAPTER XIII.

Education of the social affections — Constitutional differences — Jane — Caroline — Frank — William — The Parent's task a very responsible and delicate one.

CHILDREN are social beings. They bring into the world with them, the undeveloped elements of those very affections to which they are indebted for preservation and physical comfort during the most helpless period of their existence, as well as of all the other soft endearments of life, in the several stages of its progress. Constitutional differences there certainly are in this respect, as well as every other. Some children are naturally more social and affectionate than others. This, every mother must have observed in her own nursery. But whatever diversities may exist, the *general* constitution is everywhere the same, and the social affections need to be watchfully and judiciously *educated*, no less than the intellect, and the conscience. But how is this delicate task to be most advantageously begun, and most successfully accomplished?

In the first place, it is essential that parents should ascertain as soon as possible, what materials they have to work upon—what molding, stimulation or repression is called for. And they will soon find, as the skillful physician does in the treatment of the same disease, modified by different constitutions, that a course of training which is most admirably adapted to the peculiar temperament of one child, will not answer at all with another.

Jane is all sensibility, gentleness and affection, from the cradle. She loves her mother with all the intensity which a child is capable of feeling, and cannot bear to be separated from her for a single hour. Her affection "grows with her growth, and strengthens with her strength," until it really becomes a source of great unhappiness, whenever either the mother or the child is long from home. *Jane* is also most tenderly attached to her father, to her brothers and sisters, and in short, to all the inmates of the family who will permit her to love them. As soon as she becomes old enough to associate with other children, her extreme susceptibility leads her to form strong attachments to her little playmates; and as, at a still later period, she comes blooming into life, with so elastic a step as scarcely to brush away the dew-drop, if no check has been put upon the sparkling overflow of her social affections, she will be almost sure to give her heart and confidence to too many of her own sex, and to endanger her peace of mind, by being off her guard in her social intercourse with the other.

Caroline is a child of a very different social temperament. Though by no means destitute of natural affection, her little heart is not near so warm as that of her sister. She is more sedate and contemplative. Though she loves her parents, there is nothing of passion in her social constitution. There is a lack of warmth, instead of an excess. Even in the nursery, you would sometimes think that she has but little affection for the other children; and puss very rarely gets a chance to purr under her soft hand. As she grows up, she cares very little about play or playmates; and when she is almost as tall as her mother, and misses of her own age are becoming extremely

fond of society, she shuns it as much as she can ; and by secluding herself, gradually becomes more unsociable.

Frank, though as wild as a young roe, and as giddy as a butterfly, is all prattle and affection. He loves his parents with all his heart, and is exceedingly attached to Jane and Caroline, and all the children, whether older than himself, or younger. He wants all the little boys in the neighborhood to come and play with him three or four times in a week, and would be glad to go and play with them as often or oftener, if he could get his mother's consent. By the time he is ten years old, he has a great many favorites, to whom he is much more strongly attached than he is to his books, and on account of his peculiar amiability, is himself the favorite of all. He shoots up towards the stature of manhood, and his fondness for society constantly increases. The social party is his elysium ; and though extremely happy at home, he would be glad to spend every evening almost, in some enchanted and enchanting circle, of both sexes. Just at this critical moment, he goes as a clerk, or an apprentice, into the crowded city ; or he enters a public seminary. His fondness for company, and his social qualities, soon bring him into contact with kindred spirits—kindred, I mean, in these respects, but withal, perhaps, unprincipled and dissipated. Now had he been properly educated, he would have escaped ; for he would have been put upon his guard ; but he is lured, as a bird to the snare of the fowler. The wild, untutored growth of his social affections has ruined him.

William, on the other hand, is a chubby, spirited little fellow, and does not seem to know or care,

whether he loved his mother or not. Though he does not intend exactly to disobey her, he likes to have his own way dearly. In his intercourse with the other children, he is not decidedly bad-tempered; but if he loves them, he has a singular way of showing it, by a thousand little teasing annoyances. As the years of childhood roll on, he manifests but little desire to associate with the boys in the neighborhood, or to cultivate the social affections in any way. Even now he had rather be alone than in company. He enters the period of youth with the same aversion to society. It is plain enough that he has talents; that he has *character*; and you cannot call him a misanthrope; but he is *unsocial*, embarrassed and awkward. By this time he cannot make himself an agreeable companion if he would, and he has scarcely any desire to do it if he could. He may, indeed, be respectable in the eyes of those who can discern real merit under a forbidding exterior, but it is no wise likely that he will ever be near so happy, or useful, as he might have been under different social training.

The above are some of the diversities, in the social temperament of children, even in the same family; and the next inquiry is, *What is the province of education here?* If anything can be done to excite the social affections of children, when they are too languid, or to restrain them when they are too ardent and imaginative, and to bring them under the control of reason and sound discretion, it is our duty to do it; and experience proves that their affections may be educated with the happiest results. It is a delicate task, and "wisdom is profitable to direct," but it *can* be done.

When the mother finds, (I say the mother, for this branch of domestic education must devolve chiefly

upon her,) when the mother finds early and uncommon developments of the social affections in her child, it becomes her duty to watch them with great care, and not suffer them to outgrow the reason and judgment, and thus destroy the harmony of the faculties. I do not mean by this, that the fond parent should ever chide her little Benjamin for loving her so well; but that she should teach him to place his affections supremely upon God; that she cannot always be with him; and that whenever they may be separated for a longer or shorter time, it is his duty to bring his feelings under the control of reason, and cheerfully to acquiesce in the wise orderings of Providence.—When she perceives, as he grows older, that he is far more *social* than *contemplative*—that he is passionately fond of play to the neglect of his books—that he has a strong propensity to extend his acquaintance as far as possible among the boys, and to spend a great deal too much time in their company, it is her duty to check him. It is all very amiable to be sure; but he is getting on quite too fast. He is forming dangerous social habits. He is losing, or rather he is failing to *gain* that self-command which is essential to his safety and happiness, in the after periods of life. I do not say that in subordination to the supreme love of God, there is any danger of his loving his friends too well—of his being too affectionate a son, brother, husband, father, or friend—but that in cases of this sort, the uncommon ardor of the social principle needs to be watched, guided, and sometimes repressed, in the critical stages of childhood and youth; and this is what I mean by the education of the social affections.

But a still better illustration is afforded, by those cases where the temperature of these affections is con-

stitutionally too low. Whenever there is much deficiency in the natural warmth and activity of the social principle, a watchful mother will discover it very early, and will enter upon a course of training, with special reference to this unlovely trait of character. She will feel it her duty to stimulate and encourage, where there is too little action, just as she feels it her duty to mitigate and repress where there is too much. She will resort to all those tender allurements, which a fond parent knows so well how to employ, to excite the emotion of love in the little heart of her child; and perhaps I might say, if she is judicious and amiable herself, she will *never* fail. The wondering object of her affections in her arms, will reciprocate and reflect the emotions which she lavishes upon it, long before it is capable of knowing why. Once excited, the social affections are easily kept alive, and strengthened, and extended to the whole family circle. I know that when a child is hard to please, and shows a disposition rather to repel than invite the caresses of brothers and sisters in the nursery, it may require unceasing vigilance, and great perseverance, to bind its heart indissolubly to their hearts with the cords of love. In other words, it may be the work of years to educate the social affections, and mold the character to filial and fraternal loveliness, just as it requires many years to carry on and complete all the other processes of education.

One of the great secrets, if I am not deceived, in this critical branch of education, is to encourage various external manifestations of the social principle. So simple a thing as inducing a little child to say "*Good-night*" to the family, one by one, when it is going to bed; and "*Good-morning*" when they meet again

around the breakfast table, will exert a lasting influence upon its social character; and still more potent will be those endearing salutations which are habitually exchanged in some families, and might be in all. The expedient, too, where there is any apparent want of affection among the children, the expedient of requiring them to perform little kind offices for each other, will almost invariably be attended with the happiest effects. There is not one child in a thousand whose heart is out of the reach of these fraternal kindnesses, when affectionately proffered, and often repeated.

I fear that I have not made myself so well understood as I could wish; but I hope the attentive reader will be able to see, with tolerable clearness, what I mean by the judicious education of the social affections; and that I may have thrown out some hints, at least, which will aid Christian parents, however slightly, in this delicate branch of their duty.

CHAPTER XIV.

Education of the benevolent affections :—First course—Second course
—Third course.

By the benevolent affections, I mean those kindly feelings towards others, which are so comprehensively summed up in the second table of the Law,—“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” But for the apostasy, that bitter inheritance of the whole human family, these affections would early and spontaneously expand into full maturity, in every bosom. But alas ! our children, dearly as we love them, closely as they twine around our hearts, “are children of wrath even as others.” They are depraved and supremely selfish from the birth ; and if the grace of God do not prevent, will certainly perish in their selfishness.

But although no child comes into the world with a spark of Christian benevolence in its heart, the fall has not utterly obliterated those susceptibilities, which when quickened by the Holy Spirit, gradually ripen into the “fulfilling of the Law.” The first great object of parents should be, to educate their children for heaven ; and when this is the case, they will “travail in birth with them again, till Christ be formed in them.” But while they pray and wait for the blessing, there is much to be done in the way of moral culture. Children while unconverted, have reason and conscience to be wrought upon ; and by the presentation of proper motives, the selfish principle may not only be coun-

teracted, but their little bosoms may be made to swell with generous emotions. And here the moral instinct of a pious mother, is worth more than a whole volume of the wisest rules and suggestions. From morning to evening, she watches every budding emotion, and even while she sleeps "her heart waketh." Every selfish outbreak she instantly and almost magically represses. Every little plaything she converts into a teacher of self-denial and benevolence. And what sight can be more charming, or instructive, than to witness the process? The child ere it is capable of articulating a word, clings to its rattle with convulsive tenacity, and the mother wants it for another child, that happens to be brought into the nursery, or she wishes to accustom her darling little boy to give up whatever he seems most fond of so early, that he may never remember when he was first induced to make the sacrifice. And what course does she take? Does she force the toy from her child? Nothing would be easier than to do it; but would such a compulsory process, excite the slightest emotion of pleasure in his palpitating bosom? Would it not have directly the contrary tendency? The fond but judicious parent, knows infinitely better how to touch the cords of benevolent emotion. While the tenderest affection beams in her own eye, and plays upon every feature of her countenance, she contrives by the soft and winning tones of her voice, to overcome the reluctance of the child, too young, indeed, to know why it yields, but not too young to feel the power by which its heart is so sweetly captivated. Experience has proved a thousand times over, that a mother who has the time, and will take the trouble, (shall I call it?) can bring her infant of a few months old, to give up anything, not only without resistance,

but with the greatest apparent cheerfulness; and this is her first course of lessons, in the education of the benevolent affections.

When a year, or two later, children begin to amuse themselves with larger toys, and to vociferate with a jerk and a scowl, "This is mine, and you sha'n't have it," then is the critical moment to interpose. Cost what it will of patient effort and personal inconvenience, the parent must not leave the selfish little creature, till he is induced voluntarily to surrender the very thing which he most fondly clings to. And he must give it up for the sake of imparting pleasure to the playmate who wants it. The moment he comes to this point, the selfish principle is vanquished, and the benevolent emotion which springs up and takes its place in his bosom, is a rich compensation for the struggle which preceded it. As in every trade and art, "practice makes perfect," so here, by accustoming your child to give up whatever another wants, and to seek his own happiness in the pleasure which he imparts by the sacrifice, you wean him, (so to speak,) from himself, and add new strength from day to day, to the benevolent affections of his heart.

When he is old enough to look still further, and to understand that he was not born to wrap himself up in the silken folds of self-indulgence, but to do good; to relieve as much human distress as he can, you tell him how much better off he is, than many other children in the world and even in your own town, or neighborhood. You describe to him some scene of poverty and sickness which you have yourself witnessed. It may be of a destitute family which you have just visited, where, in the depth of winter, the children have no shoes, nor rags enough to cover their nakedness,

nor fire enough to keep them warm, nor bread when they cry for their suppers, nor comfortable beds, when they crawl away at night, to forget their hunger till morning. Or you make him sit down by your side, on his little stool, while you tell him about a child like himself, that lies parched with fever upon a few rags, in one corner of a miserable cabin, and destitute of almost every comfort. Or you describe to him another scene of destitution and suffering still more deplorable, where a mother, widowed by the recent death of her husband, or thrice widowed by his intemperance and brutality, lies pale and emaciated on a hard couch, without a nurse or friend, to minister to her necessities and surrounded by her dependent and starving children. She supported them by her labor, as long as she could drag her wasted and wasting limbs about the neighborhood, where her services were wanted. But that day is over. Her deep hoarse cough and laborious breathing, but too plainly reveal to nature of her disease, and she cannot live.

Thus you describe what you have witnessed to your child, and his whole soul is moved within him. The tear of compassion glistens in his bright eye, and he instinctively asks, where that poor mother and her starving children are? "I wish I had something to give them. I hope the people will take care of them,—I am sure they will not let them suffer." This is just what you wanted; is just the point to which you wished to bring your own sweet child—you tell him where the poor sick family is, and if not too far off, ask him whether he would like to carry them something for their relief. You see all his heart in his answer. He brushes away the tear, and wants wings to fly to their lonely dwelling. He wants to go on the same

errand again and again ; and you gratify him. You might carry comforts to the sick yourself, or, might send by the hand of a domestic ; but you have two objects in view : one is to relieve a poor distressed family, and the other is to draw forth and educate the benevolent affections of your own child. This last you cannot accomplish, without employing him as the almoner of your bounty. He might weep over your picture of real distress, as he would over any fictitious recital of human woe, but to impress it deeply on his mind, he must be permitted to take an active part in relieving it. And here comes in that very important distinction, between active and passive *habits*. While repetition strengthens the former it weakens the latter. That is, by merely listening to tales of woe, or even witnessing scenes of distress, without doing anything to relieve the suffering, the benevolent affections are blunted ; while on the other hand, the active habit of ministering to the wants of the sick or the poor, imparts new energy to the affections.

Some parents make it a point, to take one or more of their children along with them, when they visit the abodes of want and distress, that the eye may affect the heart. This is a most excellent habit. What finer topic can a mother wish for, to discourse upon when they get home, and by which to enforce upon their tender minds the claims and pleasures of benevolence, than such a scene furnishes ? And when she has made the most she can of it in this way, how does it deepen the impression, to send the little messengers of kindness back, with such nice comforts as they can carry. It is all the better, if they have something of their own, to put into the basket, with their mothers charities ; for it will make them still happier, and

more directly call into exercise their benevolent affections.

When a destitute family needs relief, or a number of poor children are to be fitted up for the Sabbath School, or there is any other similar call for charity, it has a very happy effect, for parents to consult their children about the ways and means. "What can you do *George*? Have'n't you something you would like to give *Charlotte*? How much of your little pin money have you got left *Emily*? You were going to buy a new spy-glass, *Alfred*. Suppose you should give it up, and let us see how much we can make out for this emergency." Such an appeal can never fail of exciting a lively interest, in the dear little home circle; and though the amount should be of no great intrinsic value, it is one of the best practical lessons that a parent can give, in that branch of education which we are now considering.

So in reference to all the great benevolent operations of the day, in which we live, it is a matter of pre-eminent importance, that our children should be educated to meet the demands that are coming upon them. Our low standard of giving, will never do for them. They are to stand nearer to the mellenium, and we shall have much to answer for, besides the meagerness of our own contributions, if we do not make the impression, deep as we can upon their minds, that the great use of property is *to do good*. To this end, it behooves us to make them acquainted, as early as possible, with the miserable and guilty condition of the world, and to wake up their compassion for the hundreds of millions who have no Sabbaths, no Bibles, and no Savior. To this end, let us put them, at the earliest period possible, upon earning, or saving something every month,

for charitable purposes whenever the claims of our societies are brought forward, let us accustom them to regard it as an appeal to them, as well as to us ; and let us see that they always have something to cast into the Lord's treasury. In one word, let us as parents, set a bright example of benevolent action, that they may safely walk in our steps.

CHAPTER XV.

*Restraining and governing children's appetites and passions :—Food
—Drink—Anger—Revenge—Envy.*

THIS is a very important branch of domestic education, as well as of personal duty and discipline ; so that upon every parent rests a two-fold obligation. He is bound not only to govern his own appetites and passions, but those of his children also. The process is different, and the degree of responsibility is different ; but the duty in each case is imperative. [If a parent does not govern himself ; if he does not keep his own appetites within the limits of temperate and lawful indulgence ; if he does not restrain and conquer his own evil passions, he is criminal in the first degree, because he has a *direct* power over himself. He may “keep under,” not only his body, but his “carnal mind,” if he will. There is no antagonist power, but what exists in his own bosom,—no other will to overrule his purposes, or prostrate his efforts. If he does not govern the appetites and passions of his children, or in other words, if he does not succeed in educating them to self-government, and can honestly plead that he has been faithful in the use of all the appropriate means, including the influence of his own bright example, they must answer for the rest and not he. He has not their propensities and moral agency under his control, as he has his own. This is the difference. But still, he can exert a mighty influence upon the

character of his children in this department of home education, as well as every other, and God will hold him accountable to the full extent of his ability.

It is surprising to remark, how early the appetites for food and drink, become vitiated by parental neglect, or overweening indulgence. Every healthy child, has a natural relish for plain, nutritive food, simply prepared, without gravies, or condiments; and is it not the obvious duty of every parent to preserve this unvitiated appetite as long as he can? Do not the continued health, and growth, and happiness of young children require it? Can anybody help seeing, that those who are brought up upon bread and milk, and vegetables, with a sparing use of meat, and everything prepared in a simple way, are more vigorous, and can endure all kinds of hardship and exposure much better, than those whose appetites are pampered, at a full and luxurious table? Confining children habitually to the diet which is best for them, is partly a matter of persuasion and partly of authority. It would be easy enough, were it not that in most families, there are so many tempting articles always in sight, of which others partake with a high relish; and were they not too often secretly indulged, by nurses and house-keepers. With suitable pains, taken in season, almost any child might be induced cheerfully to abstain from rich and high seasoned food, or rather might be so brought up, as to dislike it. Nature is simple in her demands, and where she is not thwarted, generally confers blooming health and length of days upon her children. Even after the mischief is done, that is, after a child has been injudiciously indulged for sometime, in the use of rich pastry, preserves, &c. much may be done to check him, and to assist him in

forming a habit of self-denial, by affectionately and frequently representing to him, how much it would be for his health and comfort, to partake of luxuries very sparingly, if at all. Under such a winning educational influence, he would find a moral power springing up within his breast, which he had not been conscious of possessing, and by beginning early, would ultimately become the master of his appetites, and wean himself with less and less trouble from whatever might justly be regarded as contraband. And where the resolution of the child is found too weak to resist the hankering of a morbid appetite, it is the unquestionable duty of parents to interpose their authority; to remove the objects of temptation, and to prohibit the use of such things as are hurtful. The boy may think himself hardly dealt by, at first, and may plead for the indulgence with an importunity, which a fond mother does not know how to resist; but if she perseveres, till she has gained her point, he will thank her all the best days of his life.

But how very different from this parental watchfulness and restraint, is the course pursued by many parents in the bringing up of their children. They are so far from resorting to restraint or repression, that they think the dear creatures ought to have as many nice little delicacies, as they want,—especially when they happen to be unwell and their appetites are poor. A mother of this class, loves to see how exquisitely her sweet William and Mary seem to enjoy their raisins, fruit, cake, and beautiful jellies, and cannot find it in her heart to deny them. Present gratification is allowed to overrule all the teachings of nature and experience. And what is the consequence? They lose their relish for every kind of nutrimental diet. Their appetites

soon become as morbid, as the most indulgent pampering can make them. Their digestive organs are cruelly, if not fatally injured. Pale and pinking, they present to every eye, the melancholy results of that overweaning parental fondness which alone fails to discover the mischief; but which, on the contrary, is pleased with an extreme delicateness of form and complexion, that promises nothing so surely as a sickly life, and an early grave.

The appetite for drink, as well as for food, needs to be watched in early childhood, and confined as much as possible, to the simple beverages of nature. In infancy, the child requires nothing but what it draws from the pure fountain of the maternal bosom; and afterwards, nothing, I am persuaded, is so grateful to the taste while unvitiated by stimulating drinks, as cold water, fresh and sparkling from the living fountain. Nothing quenches thirst like it; and what else does anybody want to drink for? My belief is, that children would never relish either tea or coffee, if it were not for the beguiling infusion of milk and sugar; and I am quite confident they would forever loathe and reject intoxicating drinks, if they were not cruelly cheated at first, by various diluting and sweetening processes. Bring up your child in habits of the strictest temperance. Teach him to shun and abhor alcohol, as he would ratsbane. Let him see an example of total abstinence from inebriating beverages of every sort. Let them never appear upon your dinner table, nor be handed around among your friends, and it will be strange, indeed, if he does not grow up a hale and perfectly healthy young man. I know it is possible, that he may be surreptitiously brought under malignant influences. The poisoned chalice may be pressed to

his lips, under sweet and aromatic disguises ; and having once tasted it, he may taste again and again, till he likes it ; till he hankers after it ; and if not rescued when he begins to reel upon the brink of the precipice, he may go over and be dashed to pieces. It is *possible*, that a son may be thus "snared and taken," and perish as a reprobate, where the parent has both by precept and example, guarded him as well as he could, against the danger. But it is not at all *probable*. There is, on the contrary strong reason to hope, that he will eschew all the diluted and villainous mixtures with which he may be tempted, and that he will live and die a sober, virtuous man. I believe, that in nearly every instance, where children imbibe the love of strong drink, it may be traced back to some neglect, to some indulgence, or to some indiscretion, on the part of parents. "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it."

But the passions of children are to be restrained and governed, as well as their appetites ; and the sooner you commence the process in the nursery, the better. I have time only to glance at *Anger, Revenge and Envy*. To begin with *Anger*. We cannot pronounce this absolutely sinful, in all cases, because an apostle has said, "Be ye angry and sin not," but there is too much reason to believe, that in nine cases out of ten, the emphatical part of this injunction, is violated. Men are angry often enough—much too often, but rarely, I am afraid, without sinning. It is surprising to observe, how early and decisively this emotion, or passion, begins to show itself. The very infant in your arms, will sometimes redden and strike, and throw back its head, and stiffen its little rebellious will, to

your utter astonishment. After all the palliating explanations that maternal affection can suggest, there will still remain too much evidence to be got over in any way, that the child's temper is up—in other words that it is really *angry* at something; and here the curb should be put on. Strong measures are not called for—they would be injudicious and absurd; but something may be done, to check and abate the emotion. Simply holding the little fellow still, for a few moments, till he feels that he is in a vice and cannot get out, may save many a mark of the plantain rod, when he comes to be two or three years older.

Some children are naturally, much more irritable than others. If they are not constantly watched and checked, their tempers get the mastery of them, long before reason and conscience come to their aid. The least cross or affront, makes them angry; and if let alone, they grow up bond-slaves to one of the most tyrannical masters in the world. Till your child is old enough to rule his own spirit, it is your duty to rule it for him, and if you neglect this duty he will have reason to complain of your unfaithfulness, when, in after life, it costs him infinite trouble to conquer that bad temper which you might so easily have repressed, by a judicious and decided course of early discipline. The process is a very plain one; and when undertaken and steadily pursued, in the fear of God, rarely proves unsuccessful. Try it—it will cost time and some trouble—but try it faithfully. Check the first angry emotion which you perceive in your child, however early; and the next, and the next, and let nothing of this sort escape you. As soon as he is old enough to comprehend the simplest appeals to his reason and conscience, be ready to avail yourself of the

advantage, and to follow it up from time to time, and from year to year, till the habit of self-government is thoroughly formed. Almost any child in its third or fourth year, can be made to see, that it is wrong to fall into a passion and strike, or in any way to injure other children. You can convince him, that the indulgence of such a temper is a sin against God, and that he will punish it. As he advances and his mind expands, you can reason and remonstrate with him, still more earnestly. You can show him that by giving way to an irascible temper, he will make himself and his friends extremely unhappy; will forfeit the respect and confidence of all the best people in society, and put it in the power of every miserable blackguard, to disarm him of his self-respect, and hold him up to ridicule and contempt. Such appeals, presented in the simple language of parental affection and solicitude, a lad of ten or twelve years old, can understand perfectly; and how sin and misery might be prevented, if all parents would watch over their children's tempers, and check every irruption of anger, with as much solicitude, as they commonly feel for their physical comfort.

Revenge, or the inflicting of pain upon any person who has injured us, for the sake of seeing him suffer, is always wrong. It would be hardly correct, perhaps, to say that children are naturally revengeful; for revenge is sweet only to a very depraved mind. At the same time, they commence their moral existence with so much native depravity, that under irritation and the absence of restraint, the odious passion is sometimes very early developed. The first step, perhaps, is mere retaliation. "The boy struck me, and I will strike him." But this does not satisfy. If one boy is hurt a little, he

must hurt the aggressor a great deal; and he soon comes not only to think it perfectly right, to return every injury with a double interest, but to feel a secret satisfaction in the pain which he inflicts. This is revenge. It may not be of a very decisive character, in its incipient manifestations; but if allowed to go on unchecked by moral restraints, it will ere long ripen into absolute malignity.

Now what is wanted, is a quick parental eye to detect it, the instant it shows itself, and a judicious and steady hand to repress it. Indeed, if you would guard your child effectually against the springing up and growth of this hateful passion in his bosom, you must go back to first principles, and teach him from the gospel, that retaliation in every degree is wrong; that instead of striking back, when smitten on one cheek, he ought rather to turn the other also. A very young child, can be made to feel, that it is nobler to forgive than to resent an injury. Undoubtedly, "line must be upon line and precept upon precept." You must enlighten his conscience, you must appeal, whenever resentment begins to swell in his breast, to the better feelings of his heart; and if in spite of all your vigilance and counteraction, he gets angry and begins to meditate retaliation, and to roll his little revenge "as a sweet morsel under his tongue," it places you at once in a very responsible position. Not a moment is to be lost. The enemy has gained a lodgement in his bosom, and must be expelled. Give him time to fortify, and the deliverance of your child may become hopeless. Take up the matter at once most anxiously and earnestly. Show him from the Bible, how wicked it is to harbor a revengeful spirit, against any living being. Dwell upon the subject till a deep impression

is made on his mind. Exhort and assist him to form the opposite habits of gentleness, kindness, magnanimity and universal good will. Were all parents to pursue this course with their children, and to enforce their precepts by a corresponding example of forbearance and forgiveness of injuries, how rarely would those violent outbreaks of revenge, which are so pregnant with misery and crime, be witnessed, or heard of.

Envy, though less violent and less malignant than revenge, is more common, and as it winds its way more insidiously into the youthful mind, parents cannot be too much on the alert, to detect and crush it in the bud. It often erects its snaky crest, in the nursery. One child has a prettier rattle, or a handsomer doll, or a nicer top than another, and it begets envy. So when children begin to go abroad, and compare what they have, with what they see in more wealthy families, their envy is very apt to be excited. Other children's clothes are handsomer and better than theirs, and they live in finer houses, and ride in beautiful carriages, and have nothing to do but play and enjoy themselves. All this and much more, that they see and want, is food for envy ; and here the watchful and judicious parent, will feel the importance of guarding his children against a passion, which in its maturity becomes at once so hateful and tormenting, by reminding them, how many things they have to be thankful for, and showing them how sinful it is, to look, with an envious eye, upon those whom God has been pleased to place in easier circumstances. Thus by beginning early, and repressing the emotion in all its germinant manifestations, may parents prevent it from ever

bringing forth those bitter fruits, which are seminally wrapped up in the bud. I might offer similar remarks upon the importance of restraining and governing all the passions, that lurk in the infant bosom, but it is unnecessary.

I

CHAPTER XVI.

Educating children ~~to Lie~~—To Drink—To Swear.

THERE is no one of the grosser vices, I think, to which children have so early and strong a propensity as falsehood. What christian parent has not been struck with that remarkable text, almost as if it were to be literally understood, "they go astray as soon as they be born *speaking lies*?" Every parent wishes to have it understood that he holds truth to be one of the cardinal virtues in a family and that there is no offence for which he would sooner punish a child than lying; and yet, I am afraid it would be no exaggeration to say, that a majority of parents in this christian land, and among them many that are highly respectable and even conscientious, actually educate their own children to habits of dissimulation and downright falsehood. This is done in various ways.

Some parents teach their children to lie by the laxness of their own moral philosophy. They hold with Paley that "there are falsehoods which are not lies; that is, which are not criminal," and if the subject happens to come up in conversation, they avow and strenuously maintain the doctrine in presence of their families. It is true, they explain and illustrate and try to make distinctions between *whits* lies and *black*

lies. But these distinctions, children do not and cannot understand. With them, a lie is a lie, whatever may be its *color*; nothing but taking the broad scriptural ground, that lying is criminal in all cases, will save them from falling into the detestable habit. The parent who speculates with Dr. Paley, may imagine that he sees a wide difference between one falsehood and another; but his children will not see it and he might just about as well tell them, in so many words, that they may violate the truth, whenever they think any important end will be answered by it, as to leave the door open at all. There is no safety but in teaching them, that all lies are *black*, in the sight of God; and that "all liars shall have their part in the lake, which burneth with fire and brimstone."

Others again, teach their children to lie by *example*: and this is by far the most common method. Some parents are notoriously in the habit of telling great stories, to amuse their friends, or to excite the marveling of the credulous, and their children are among the listeners. The ground work may be true, but most of the filling out is sheer fabrication. The father calls it innocent embellishment. He would be shocked were you to tell him, that he has been uttering a tissue of falsehoods; and yet this is only giving the right name, to the creations of his fancy. "As the old cock crows the young ones learn." As is the father, so is the son. He too begins to tell his large stories, to make the boys wonder; and having once fairly overleaped the sacred barriers of truth, goes on from step to step, till he becomes a shameless and incurable liar. This he can never do without incurring great personal guilt, it is true, but it was his *father* who led him into temptation, and he must answer for it.

Again ; some persons teach their children to lie by the manner in which they excuse themselves, when they do not wish to see company. " Tell whoever calls this afternoon, that I am not at home." The direction is given to a servant, probably ; but the children overhear it, and it surprises them. They are at a loss what to make of it, but they know it is not true. In other words, they know that it is as palpable a lie, as ever was uttered in the world. The parent may try to explain, and set the matter right, by saying this is the way to let visiting friends know, that it is not convenient to wait upon them, and as they understand it perfectly well, there is no harm in it. But the children in the nursery (simple souls !) are no such genteel casuists ; and whatever solemn homilies their parents may read to them, upon the sacredness of truth and the guilt and shame of lying, they will all the while be thinking of the example, which those very parents have shamelessly set them ; and will be far more likely to follow their example than to observe their precepts. I would fain hope, that such cases are now extremely rare, at least in this country ; but if there are *any*, they deserve the most unqualified condemnation.

There is another method adopted by many persons, to excuse themselves from receiving calls, which though it may be strictly true, is so liable to be misapprehended by young children, that it becomes parents to be very guarded and particular. It is this—" If any one calls, say I am engaged." There can be no objection to such an excuse, where a parent has important business, or duties to attend to, and cannot be interrupted. Or if there is any objection, it is on the score of *courtesy*, rather than deception. But do not some parents avail themselves of the above excuse, for not seeing

company when their children cannot perceive that they are any more busy than usual ; and when in fact, they have nothing in particular to attend to, but only do not wish to be seen. In every such case, there is great danger, that the children will regard it as a violation of strict veracity ; and where there is any semblance of deception in the case, it will tend to nullify the best lessons, which a parent can give upon the sacred duty of always telling the truth, whatever loss or inconvenience it may occasion. Let pious mothers think of this and beware.

Another way in which parents sometimes learn their children to lie is, by violating their own promises. Thus, one borrows a sum of money of a friend, and promise absolutely to repay it by such a day. The day arrives and the money is not paid. The borrower excuses himself, by saying, that he has been disappointed where money was due to him, or by offering some other reason for not redeeming his pledge. But his children, who happened to overhear the conversation, when the money was borrowed, and recollect that the promise was unconditional, will be exceedingly apt to make a bad use of it. " Father does not keep his promises, and why should we be so very particular about keeping ours ? " Thus, in all probability, will they reason, and with such a parental example for their justification, it cannot be helped.

Take another case. A man promises to sell a piece of property to his neighbor, for so much ; but finding he can make a more advantageous bargain, refuses to deliver it—in other words breaks his promise. Or another ; an individual engages to do a job of work, on such a day, and he does not come. Or a mechanic promises to send home a piece of furniture, or a coat,

or a pair of boots, without fail, by such a time : but forfeits his word. Now in these and all similar cases besides the sinfulness of violating express promises, and the disappointments which ensue, the effect upon children, is extremely bad. It leads them not only to break their promises, in like manner, without any compunction, when it is inconvenient to keep them : but also, to indulge themselves in direct and palpable falsehood. Do you say, that your children need not, and will not know what promises you make, nor how you keep them ? You are greatly mistaken. They hear everything, and know everything, and notice everything that is said or done in the family, and there is no security, but in saying just what you mean ; and where there is the least chance of failure, to annex such conditions to your promises, that every one will see there is no violation of your word in the case.

But some parents, who are scrupulously exact in fulfilling all their promises out of the family seem to think it quite innocent to practice various deceptions upon their children at home. Some of these deceptions are breaches of promise, and some are not. I will just glance at a few of them. A child is sick, and it becomes necessary to administer a very disagreeable medicine. The poor little patient objects, because it is so bitter or so sickish ; and the mother or the father, to get over the difficulty, tells him that it does not taste bad at all. The child takes it, and if he does not ruefully look up and say, "it tastes awfully and you have told me a lie," he will remember it as long as he lives, and will in all probability, try to justify himself in a thousand falsehoods, referring back to the example, which was set him by his parents, in that sick room. A tooth must be extracted, or a sur-

gical operation becomes necessary; and the child shrinks from it. What is to be done in such a case? The parent instead of meeting it fairly and frankly, and encouraging his little boy to endure the pain manfully, gravely assures him that it will not hurt him, or that it will hurt him but little, when he knows better. Now what is this, but teaching a child a lesson in lying, which he will never forget? So when a father says to his child, on a sick bed, "Here is a bright silver dollar; if you will take your medicine, I will give it to you" or here "I will give you my watch, if you will do just as the doctor says, so that you may get well." Now if he recovers, and the dollar or the watch is taken back, he feels and knows, that his father has broken his promise, and the example may ruin him.

A mother wishes to leave her child at home, and go out of town. It cries, and with much ado is quieted, by the promise of a new top, or a nice little doll, when she returns; but she does not bring it. Or, she promises to take the child along with her, the next time she goes, and does not keep her word; or when she is going out, to be gone all day, tells the little tearful objector that she is only going to the next house, and will be back in a few minutes. In these, and a hundred other similar ways, are some parents in the habit of lying to their children, (I cannot give it any milder name;) and is it strange, if under such tuition, the children grow up in confirmed habits of deception and falsehood, whatever contrary lessons may be taught them? Let every parent look well to this whole matter, lest the guilt of learning his own offspring to lie, should be found in his skirts where he little suspects it.

As some parents thus educate their children to lie,

no others, or the same, perhaps, learn them to *drink*. This used to be the case in almost every family. The little stranger could scarcely spend two days in the world before it must be dosed with alcohol to bring off the wind from its stomach while its mother was taking hot sling, to be given off through all the lacteal channels. And the course of physical education thus early commenced, was continued, through the whole period of infancy, so that children hankered after intoxicating stimulants, before they could "discern their right hand from the left." Whatever other branch of education was neglected, this went steadily on. The parents drank, I do not mean in all cases regularly, nor what was then called intemperately; but the parents drank, and the children drank; and they thought it did them good. The decanters sparkled upon every side-board; the social glass went round, whenever a friend called, and the younger children were fed with a tea-spoon from the bottom of the tumbler, while the older boys wanted less and less sugar and more and more alcohol.

Why we did not all become drunkards under such training, is the wonder, is I had almost said, the *miracle*. I am sure it was nothing but the restraining grace of God, that saved us. And are there not many parents even now, who "bring up" their children in a similar manner? They daily set them the example of drinking intoxicating liquors: never perhaps to absolute inebriation; but freely, and with a zest, which cannot be mistaken. It may be, that the father takes nothing stronger than wine, that with the brimming glass of Maderia in his hand, he now and then delivers an eloquent lecture upon the vile practice of drinking ardent spirits, and his children hear it

but they see him empty his glass, too, and when his friends come to dine, their glasses are filled in like manner. Now this is about as sure a way to initiate young men into habits of intemperance, as it would be freely to circulate the toddy and the sling, in the same families. Such is human nature, that the learners will go farther than their teachers. If fathers, drink wine freely, the sons will think themselves perfectly justified in drinking brandy; and I have no doubt, that in this way, many become intemperate to the great grief of their parents and their own utter ruin.

Some men who never drink even wine, themselves, are so much dissatisfied with what they call the ultra temperance movements of the day, that they cannot help expressing their opinions freely, in opposition to these measures, whenever the subject is introduced. I confess it always makes me tremble when I hear them; for their children will not make proper distinctions. When they hear their father condemning the course of some of the most devoted friends of temperance, it will naturally prejudice them against those men, as well as their measures; and they will be very liable to understand him as opposing the *cause* itself, when nothing is further from his mind. My apprehensions on this score may be entirely groundless; for I do not recollect ever to have heard them expressed by others; but I cannot relieve my mind from the impression, that some excellent men greatly injure their own families, by the freedom of their remarks upon societies and tee-total pledges, when their only object is to guard against extremes. Parents cannot be too cautious what they say in the hearing of their children. It surely were better to be entirely silent, than to leave

the slightest impression upon their minds, unfavorable to so great and good a cause as that of temperance.

I remark again, that some fathers learn their children to *swear*, as well as to drink. It cannot be supposed, that any into whose hands this little book will fall, are guilty of doing so, either by precept, or direct example. No one but the most impious and hardened reprobate, would call up his little boy, and tell him to take God's holy name in vain. And a man must be entirely lost to all sense of religion and decency, before he can indulge himself in profane swearing in his family. But are there not some, who while they would shudder to have an oath fall from their lips anywhere, nevertheless indulge themselves in expressions, bordering so much upon profanity, that the effect may be nearly the same. If a father is every now and then exclaiming, by George, by the Grand Turk, &c., will not the son go further, and bring in the name of God? If the father says *I vow*, will not the son use a much stronger expression: and if he proceeds from step to step, till he becomes notoriously profane, will not the father be in some degree answerable for it, even though he should every sabbath-day teach his children the ten commandments?

Another way in which men, even of high moral and religious standing, sometimes unwittingly learn their children to swear, is by repeating (shall I say, endorsing?) the profanity of others, for the amusement of their friends. They would not for the world, utter a profane oath, in the *first* person; but they will, with the greatest apparent satisfaction, relate profane stories and anecdotes, by the hour together, using the very expressions, which are agreed on all hands, to

be in direct violation of the third commandment. Such and such a man, they say, was a shrewd wicked fellow, and he swore so and so—repeating the identical oaths, which he uttered, and that in presence of their families. Now what must be the influence of this *second hand* swearing, upon the young and tender mind of a child, when it seems to be “rolled as a sweet morsel under a father’s tongue,” and is evidently enjoyed by the whole company? Will the boy make the distinction, which they make, between swearing in the first and in the third person? Will he be satisfied with merely going away, and repeating the same facetious stories and anecdotes, to his young companions? When, the oaths which he first heard from his father’s lips have become familiar to his own, will he rest there, or will he pass the line and become absolutely profane himself? And if he does form the odious and wicked habit of swearing, from whom did he learn it? “Let your communication be yea yea, nay nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.”

I might proceed to show how parents in like manner, sometimes learn their children to *cheat*, to *steal*, to *break the sabbath* and the like; but the remarks and illustrations which I should have to offer, would be so much like the foregoing, that I will not enlarge. And now, in conclusion, I commit these chapters to the blessing of that God and Savior, who has enabled me to bring them to a close, beseeching Him to accept of this feeble attempt to assist all those young heads of families into whose hands they may happen to fall, to “bring up their children, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”



APPENDIX.

Extract from the London Christian Observer.

THE years which precede manhood are naturally divided into several periods. The first is from early infancy to the time when the child begins to read. The next is from that important event, to another as important, namely, to going (if a boy) to school or to a private tutor. The years spent at school naturally form a distinct period ;—and those devoted to college, or to a clerkship, or an apprenticeship, another. The last period is that when a young man is just entering on the full duties and privileges of manhood.

The period of infancy is generally suffered to slide away with little or no attention to the work of education. The child is supposed to be in a kind of irrational state, which will scarcely admit of moral discipline, and its parents seem to think only of its health and amusement. If it wants anything its wish must be gratified ; if it cries, it is to be quieted by indulgence ; or if this cannot be, attempts are frequently made to cheat it into a belief that the desired object has suddenly vanished. If it has been hurt, the immediate cause of its misfortune, whether animate or inanimate, is not seldom to be beaten, and the child itself is encouraged to join in inflicting the punishment.

Things proceed in this way nearly till the time when the child can talk, and often much longer; and when this system is changed for another, still it gives way very slowly, and in many cases some remains of it may be discerned for years after the child is allowed to be capable of instruction. What is the true character and tendency of this course of proceeding? It unquestionably fosters those seeds of evil which abound in our nature. Is man naturally self-indulgent? What then must be the effect of a studied system of indulgence? Is he impatient, and passionate, and vindictive? How greatly must these dispositions be cherished, by not only permitting but encouraging their gratification! Is he disposed, when in pursuit of favorite objects, to be little scrupulous with respect to violations of plain-dealing and truth? The artifices resorted to by nurses and female relations would almost create such a disposition, were it not originally planted in his bosom. With what eyes then must the Almighty look upon such a course of proceeding! It would be trifling with your readers to pursue this topic any farther.

But now we proceed to the important inquiry, What system or management ought to be substituted in the place of that which has been described? All persons who do not think that a plea of necessity (a very unfounded plea, however, in the present case), may be urged in favor of the practice of positive evil, must allow, that everything should be avoided by mothers and nurses which has a tendency to cherish and bring into activity that evil nature, which *your* readers at least will not deny that we all bring into the world. They will grant, therefore, that Nanny, or the cat, or the chair, are not to be *slapped* because they happen to

have displeased the child. But must not we confine ourselves to mere abstinence from fostering evils? Is it not visionary and chimerical to attempt to check bad tempers and habits, and to lay a foundation for good ones? Or if an attempt of this kind be not altogether hopeless, is it not at least unnecessary to make it at so early a period, when little success can be expected; and most advisable to defer it till the reason of the child is further advanced, and its ability to submit to discipline is greater? My experience gives me a view of parental duty very different from that to which these questions would lead. The Almighty Creator very soon begins to unfold in man those intellectual and moral faculties which are destined, when rightly employed, to qualify him for the highest services and enjoyments through the ages of eternity. In a few weeks after its birth, a child's reason begins to dawn; and with the first dawn of reason ought to commence the moral culture which may be best suited to counteract the evils of its nature, and to prepare the way for that radical change, that new birth signified in baptism, and the darling object of the hopes of every parent who looks on the covenants in that holy rite, not as forms, but as realities. Let me appeal to every mother who delights to view her infant as it lies asleep in her lap, whether it does not soon begin to read "the human face divine," to recognize her smile, and to show itself sensible of her affection in the little arts she employs to entertain it. Does it not, in no long time, return that smile, and repay her maternal caresses with looks and motions so expressive that she cannot mistake their import? She will not doubt, then, the importance of fostering in its bosom those benevolent sympathies which delight her, by banishing from

her nursery whatever is likely to counteract them. She will not tolerate in a nurse that selfish indifference to the wants of an infant, which sometimes leaves it to cry while she finishes her breakfast, or chats with a companion. Much less will she tolerate passionate snatches, and scolding names, and hard and impatient tones of voice, in the management of her child. I may be pronounced fanciful, perhaps, but I certainly think it would be of importance to keep sour and ill-humored faces out of a nursery, even though such faces were not commonly accompanied by corresponding conduct. I am persuaded that I have seen a very bad effect produced by a face of this kind on the countenance and mind of an infant. Is it not reasonable to suppose, that if an infant sympathizes with a smile, it may also sympathize with a scowl, and catch somewhat of the inward disposition which distorts the features of the nurse? Thus begin the efforts of a parent to cherish all that is benevolent and affectionate in the bosom of a child; and to prevent the growth of every thing of an opposite nature. And who shall presume to assign limits to the importance of such efforts in the education of a being whose leading disposition, if it fulfill the will of its Maker, must, both through life and through all eternity, be *love*?

But parental cares soon extend. In a short time, impatience and selfishness show themselves, and are accompanied by fretfulness, jealousy, anger, and envy. At so early a period does innate corruption display its powers, and call for the restraining hand of a parent! But how are these evils to be counteracted at an age when both the body and mind are so tender, and when neither arguments nor explanations can be understood? Undoubtedly great delicacy of treatment is required.

The character of the child must be studied : and, if possible, such corrections of evils must be applied as will not deeply wound its feelings. It is surprising what female ingenuity, quickened by maternal tenderness, will achieve in this way. Does a child, too young to listen to reason, want something it ought not to have? Its mother will suddenly turn its attention to another object, and thus prevent the rise of improper tempers, or arrest them in their course. Is it jealous of the attention paid to a brother? While she perseveres, perhaps, in showing to the brother the kindness which has raised this jealousy, she will pour such a stream of affection on both the children as shall at once show them how much each is the object of her love, and lead them by sympathy to feel a similar love for each other. This will be the best antidote to jealousy. But cases will arise, in which, with all her ingenuity, she will not be able to effect her purpose in this way. On such occasions, if the child is too young to understand reason and persuasion, she will as far as possible shorten and sweeten its trial, but without fostering bad dispositions in its bosom. If it is a little older, she will endeavor to turn the trial to good account, by holding up to it such Christian and filial motives as suit his character. These will be accompanied by such a description and exemplification, on the one hand, of the effects they ought to produce, and of the sunshine of soul to which they lead ; and on the other, of the hatefulness of the fault in question, of the unhappiness which must attend the commission of it, and of the regret and bad consequences that must follow ; as may, by God's help, prepare its tender mind for spiritual discrimination, and a spiritual taste (if I may so speak), and give its infant affections some bias on the side of God and duty.

But how, some parents may ask, how can this be effected at so tender an age? It seems to us impossible. — Believe me, much may be done, with very young children, by placing gradually before them, with cheerfulness and affection, and in a spirit suited to the occasion, religious truths, associated as much as may be with images pleasing to their minds. The appellations, God, and Jesus, should soon be made familiar to them; and the dwelling-place of these great Beings may be so pointed out and described; and their power, and their holiness, and more especially their love, may be so set forth and brought home to the feelings, by little and simple illustrations, that, while the tender mind is imbued with the first rudiments of religious knowledge, reverence and affection for divine things shall, if God smile on the endeavor, be excited in the heart. But special care must be taken not to give fatiguing lectures, nor too make too powerful calls on the feelings. “Here a little and there a little,” must be the parent’s motto in conveying instruction at this age; and for that little, the seasons must be chosen, when the child is most likely to lend a willing ear; and the subject must always be dropped before it becomes tiresome, unless there be some very pressing call for its being continued; in which case, indeed, the occasion itself will generally make it interesting. Very short and simple stories from Holy Writ may be employed with great advantage: as that of Jesus taking the little children in his arms, and blessing them? that of his restoring the widow’s son to life; and many others. If these are told in a cheerful manner, and with such little appropriate touches as will present the scene to the imagination of the child, they will seldom fail to delight it, and will be called for again and again. When

they are fixed in its memory, it is evident with what great advantage reference may be made to them when the parent finds occasion to have recourse to dissuasion, or reproof, or exhortation.

In conveying instruction, it is a most important point for the parent always to bear in mind, that far more may be done by exciting the sympathy of the child than by appealing to its reason. Things indeed should always be presented to it in the garb of truth and good sense ; but, unless its feelings are in union with its convictions, it may be perfectly persuaded of truths without being influenced by them in practice. And how are the appropriate feelings to be excited in its bosom ? Chiefly by the feelings of the parent being in unison with the subject on which he speaks. Is he dwelling on the greatness of God, or on his all seeing eye, or on his eternity, or on his glory ? Let his own heart harmonise with his lofty theme, and probably the right string in that of his child will vibrate. Is he describing the Divine love, and tenderness, and mercy, especially as exemplified in Jesus Christ ? If his own feelings are impressed by the view of the picture he presents, those of his child are not likely to be altogether unmoved. But reverse the case as to the parent, and what is to be expected from the child ? Who can be so absurd as to hope, that, when religious truths are taught as a school-master teaches the grammar, good impressions will be made on the heart ? Do we see, in fact, that when the Catechism is so taught, any such impression is made ? Step into a village school where that excellent compendium of our holy religion has been learnt merely as a task, and you will find the children as little affected by its truths (even if they understand it) as they are by the lessons in their spell-

ing-book. One would almost think that they conceived it pointed out the high privileges and the sacred duties of the man in the moon, and that they had nothing to do with it but to get it by heart. Few, if any, parents, it is hoped who make religion a branch of education, proceed in a way so utterly irrational as the generality of village schoolmasters ; but in whatever degree they approach to the village-school system, in that degree must they look for a similar result. If

“ Si vis me flere, dolendum est
Primum ipsi tibi.”

be a just description of human nature, when applied to adults, it is doubly and trebly so in the case of children. Adults have been used to attach certain feelings to certain circumstances in life, and the recurrence of the latter will do much towards exciting the former ; but children have not yet learnt (except in some obvious instances) how the events of life will influence their welfare, and therefore it is no wonder that their feelings should not be excited, until they see how others feel. The great Creator has ordained, that in early childhood all the powers and faculties of man are placed under the guidance, and in a very great degree under the forming hand, of his parents. His feelings are as ready as his intellectual powers to take the impression that may be given them. How strong are the prejudices imbibed from parents in early youth ! When pains are taken to produce a similarity, how strongly do we see the prominent features in the manners, habits, and feelings of parents reflected in their offspring ! A little gipsey is an adult gipsey in miniature. I am told that among the Gentoos a like similarity is very apparent ; and I have myself been struck by it among the Quakers, a sect whom I by no means mention to

dishonor. Why may not the potent engine which produces such striking effects among these and other classes, of men, and often promotes feelings and habits adverse to good sense and propriety, to good order, or to true religion, be employed in favor of the best interests of man, and the glory of God? To suffer it to lie idle, is sin and folly. But in fact it will not be absolutely idle. Something or other children will always be catching from their parents; and through the corrupt bias of human nature, they will be far more ready to catch the evil than the good: and even in copying what is innocent, if not positively good, in parents, they will be very apt to give it some turn, or associate it with some bad quality, which may make it subservient to evil. What then is likely to be the effect of negligence in this great point? In truth, can we look around us, and not have lamentable proofs of its effect? How many children of good parents do we see imitating little in parental example but neglect of duty! In the parent, this neglect has been chiefly visible perhaps in education; but the child, as might be expected, extends it much farther. Or, suppose the parent to be led by a blind fondness to humor his child, to overlook his faults, and to allow himself to omit the present duty of restraining and ruling him, under some vague hope that a more favorable time will arrive for the exercise of his power, or that God will in his own time, by his own providence, and the teaching of his own Spirit, correct the faults which the father tolerates. Shall we not be extremely likely to find that a child so educated will chiefly resemble his parent in giving way to self-delusion and self-indulgence, and in indistinct and unscriptural reliance on future providences, to the neglect of present duties? But it is

not only by copying his faults that a child derives evil from a parent : if care be not taken, qualities and habits innocent, or even commendable, will be so caught or so imitated by the child as to administer to the gratification of evil passions. Is the parent energetic ? Let him guard against his child's adopting his energy as an engine of pride or ambition. Is he jocose ? His playful humor may be imitated by the child for the purpose of putting by serious thought or vigorous application ; or of indulging in ridicule or satire ; or of practising tricks not consistent with simplicity and sincerity of character, and employed probably for selfish purposes. Nay, unless care be taken, piety itself in a parent, that child of Heaven, may lead to fanaticism, or cant, or hypocrisy in a child. Tones and gestures, which (though, as I think, to be avoided) are in the parent the fruit of true communion with his Maker, often become quite disgusting or pitiable in the child, not being connected with those deep devotional feelings which can alone make them tolerable ; or, if so connected, being utterly unsuited to his age.

This subject might be pursued further : but enough has been said to excite the reflections of well meaning parents ; and those reflections will naturally point to the particular circumstances of each individual, and be far more useful than anything I could add. No one can doubt the deep responsibility of every parent to make a good use of his power over the dispositions and affections of his offspring. And since, in exercising that power, nothing will be so operative as his own example, how earnest should he be, that the light which shines forth from him may be the true light of the Gospel, purified as much as may be from everything that may obscure or defile it ! And also how earnest should

be to join to such an example a sagacious watchfulness, and even a holy jealousy, to prevent his child from misunderstanding his example, or the principles and motives from which it springs; and to prevent a perverse or deceptive use being made of it!

I shall conclude this chapter, by guarding the readers against some evils not uncommon in families, which are in direct hostility with the principles here laid down.

1. Let a parent be particularly on his guard against his faults and weaknesses when in the bosom of his family. The reverse is not seldom the case. The circumspection and restraint practised abroad, are often greatly relaxed at home. Here liberties and self-indulgences are thought more allowable; wrong tempers are not instantly repressed in the bosom, and are suffered to deform the countenance, and also sometimes to break out in unchristian tones, expressions and conduct. We must all have observed this in others; and few of us, I conceive, are unconscious of having been sometimes taken by surprise on the entrance of a friend, of having felt that it was necessary to recall both the mind and the face to greater serenity and benignity, in order to receive him properly. Now can we seriously think, that a heart and a countenance unfit for our friend, was fit for our children, who surrounded us before his arrival? Can we estimate the mischief which such moral deformity, placed before their eyes in the person of their father, may produce? Some one says, that no man is a hero before his valet-de-chambre. I will not stop to inquire what is becoming in a hero; but a Christian certainly ought, if possible, to be *more* a Christian before his family, where his influence is greatest, and the effects of his

example the most important, than in any other situation. Juvenal has said, "*maxima debetur pueris reverentia*;" though his view of education was only to prepare youth for an upright and able discharge of their common duties in this life, with little regard to God or eternity. How deep then ought his maxim to sink into the heart of a Christian, whose views are so much higher, and who is to educate beings called to perform all their duties as those who now sit in heavenly places, and are kings and priests unto God!

2. Never make mere playthings of your children. Many fathers treat their little ones, as if nothing was to be sought in their society but mutual amusement. All is good humor when they are together; and therefore all is supposed to be right, though there be little besides folly and self-indulgence on the one, and improper liberties, caprice, self-will or artifice on the other. In short, there seems to be a sort of conspiracy between the parties to indulge the natural man. The child is often even taught to be indecorous, and mischievous, and saucy, for the amusement of its parent. What excuse can be made for such a scene? The poor child is greatly to be pitied; but really the parent, if he were to look no further, would appear to be a sort of monster, devoid of principle, of feeling, and of common sense. Follow him, however, to his serious occupations, and you may find him a useful and respectable man. What a shame, that he is insensible to the high destiny and unspeakable value of the little creature whom he is spoiling, for the sake of half an hour's foolish trifling! What would he say of any one who threw about his gold repeater as if it were a ball, or made marbles of his wife's jewels? And yet his own folly is infinitely greater. The creatures

whom he is placing in such danger for his sport, are infinitely more precious than gold, which perisheth; and pearls and diamonds are worthless compared with them. One would think that mere selfishness might restrain such absurdity, even in a man who did not extend his view beyond this world. The time may come, when the evil fostered in the child will be a scourge to the parent, and when he will be made its victim, with the less regret from a recollection that these scenes of egregious folly had undermined that natural respect which would otherwise have been a check to ill conduct on the part of his child.—May parents, then, never relax with their children? must they always sustain the grave character of a tutor? Most certainly they may, and ought, frequently to relax with them, and even take pains to make them happy; but they may combine this extremely well with a constant recollection of the immortal nature and high value of their children, for whom Christ died, and with a suitable behavior towards them. A father will soon learn, in such playful moments, "*miscere utile dulci*"; or, according to our English proverb, to "be merry and wise;" and he will rank such seasons among those which are most important for checking what is wrong in a child, fostering what is right, instilling good principles, infusing a just appreciation of things, and a taste for what is lovely and of good report. All the good seed sown on such occasions will be so combined with the child's pleasures and affections, as with God's blessing, to take deep root in the soul, and promise a vigorous and permanent growth.

3. In managing a child, let a parent always have the child's good, rather than his own ease, in view.

In domestic education, "don't be so troublesome,"

is perhaps the most common of all our complaints, when parents address their children. It is true, children ought not be suffered to be troublesome, since both kindness and propriety forbid them to be so ; but the tone of the complaint generally shows very clearly that the great grievance is, not that the child has those dispositions which make it troublesome, but that others, and particularly the complainant, are troubled. Thus the child soon discovers, that it is corrected rather for the ease of its parents and attendants, than for its own good ; and it has before it an example and a lesson of selfishness, which may do it as much harm as it receives benefit from the check given to a bad habit. What ought to be done on such occasions ? Undoubtedly the troublesome practice should be prevented ; but this should be done in a way to show the child that the parent would willingly submit to trouble, to promote its good ; but that such dispositions as lead it to trouble others, are unchristian, and must be eradicated. The pleasure a Christian will have in giving pleasure, and his pain in occasioning pain must be pointed out, and proved and illustrated. As nothing is to be combated in children with more care and perseverance than selfishness, so nothing is to be more strictly guarded against in parental example. The child is to be taught to make sacrifices cheerfully, and to deny himself, and take up his cross ; and the parent must be especially careful that his own example forward the learning of this difficult lesson. On occasions in which the admonition is "don't be troublesome," would not "don't be thoughtless," "don't be violent," or "don't be unkind," be often more appropriate ? Is it expedient very generally to use a mode of expression which points to the effect

rather than the cause of a child's conduct ; to the consequences produced to others, rather than the state of his own mind ?

4. In correcting a fault, look to the heart rather than to the outward act.

How common is it for parents to pursue the opposite course ! They are satisfied with condemning and preventing wrong conduct, without much attending to the temper of mind in which their animadversions are received, and the child is often left unhumiliated and discontented, and in a state as displeasing to God as when it was committing the fault in question. This mode of proceeding appears to me essentially wrong, and productive of serious evil. It does not bring the child to repentance before God, and to peace with him. It directs its view to the maintenance of decency in externals, rather than to a jealous scrutiny of its motives and dispositions, and an earnest desire of reconciliation with its God, after having offended him. Though these marks of true repentance cannot be expected at so early an age in their full extent, yet a broad foundation for them is often laid during the two or three first years of infancy. On the other hand, when we see a child scowl, or snatch up his shoulders, or pout and redden, on being blamed, can the rebellious and unbending spirit within be doubted ? Is he humbled for his fault, and in a spirit to forsake it and seek forgiveness ? Is there any putting off of the old man, and putting on of the new man ? And yet, can it be denied that this is the only temper to which the promise of pardon is made ? It is the temper in which adults must come to Christ for pardon and peace : and it is therefore the temper to which, from the very dawn of reason, we should endeavor to bring children.

In our endeavors to effect this great object, kind, mild and serene, but steady perseverance is to be employed. There must be neither violence nor hurry. If the child is impatient, some constraint, if necessary, must be used to prevent ebullitions of passion or fretfulness, and time must be given for it to recover itself: then steady and unwearied, but calm and affectionate, addresses to its reason and feelings must be used suited to its age and habits and natural disposition. The sagacity and ingenuity of the parent must be tasked to select the best topics, and handle them in the best manner, for the production of the desired effect. But, above all, his eye must be upon God for guidance and a blessing, and for putting his own mind in the frame best adapted to win upon the affections of the child, and impress his heart. The dawnings of a right spirit must be hailed; openness and confidence must be courted and encouraged; the kindness of God and Christ to penitents must be as fully and touchingly insisted upon as their hatred of sin. Care must be taken not to overstrain or overpower the feelings; and when any danger of this appears, a pause must take place till they are relieved, and self-command is regained. This course admits of great variations, and must be carefully adapted to the age and character and attainments of the child: but I think I can say from experience, that it will seldom if ever fail of success if steadily and habitually pursued. It may be said to begin from nothing, and for several months a very small part of it will be brought forwards, though there will be a continual progress as the mind of the child opens, and *something* right in moral feeling and habit is established. It will begin to learn the difference between being good and naughty; then, that though it

desists from doing a naughty thing, it continues naughty till it is sorry for it and good humored ; and then, and not till then, it may expect the kiss of forgiveness, and regain the favor of its parent. Next it will be taught to reflect on its happiness when good, and on the pain it suffers when naughty ; and it will be told that this is from God, who loves goodness and hates naughtiness, as it sees its parents do. Then it will proceed to learn that, like its parents, God expects sorrow for sin ; and a mild and humble prayer for forgiveness, before he will forgive a naughty child, and love it, and make it happy. While this is in progress, the parent will endeavor to make the child feel the evil and folly of naughtiness, and the beauty and true wisdom of being good. This will not be very difficult to inculcate, when the child is sensible that sin and misery, and holiness and happiness, generally go together. During the latter part of this course, gospel facts and principles will be gradually opened. The child will have heard of Christ ever since he first heard of God ; and now the distinct character and offices of Christ will begin to be unfolded. He will be painted as the friend of mankind ; as the great refuge of the naughty ; as always willing to help them, and beg his Father to forgive them ;—as all kindness, and goodness, and as setting us an example of all that is lovely and excellent ; and as now exalted in glory, and all-wise and all-powerful. Pains will be taken to make Him the object of affection attempered by reverence, and to make it pleasant to the child to please him, and painful to offend him. The child will in like manner be made acquainted with the Holy Ghost, and heaven and hell, and the day of judgment and eternity, and the lost state of man and redemption. All these things will be taught with an immediate refer-

ence to practice and the heart. They must be unfolded gradually, and with a strict attention to the abilities and temperament of the child, and especial care must be taken that by God's blessing the feelings shall be properly affected as the understanding is informed.

5. Be on your guard against the little wiles and artifices which children will soon employ to obtain their ends.

It is surprising how ingenious and adroit they will be in this way. They will endeavor to do, as a bit of play, something which they know to be wrong and forbidden; and to put you off by a laugh and a joke, when you require them to acknowledge that they have done wrong. These little tricks lead to much evil. They undermine sincerity and simplicity of character; and instead of being amused by them, as is often the case, a parent should carefully repress them. It is a good general rule with young folks, that nothing shall be said or done in joke, which would be naughty if in earnest. More latitude may be allowed to those who are grown up: but children cannot discriminate between what is innocent in jokes, and what is not; and if they could, they have not sufficient steadiness of principle and self-command to confine themselves within the proper bounds, if suffered in their moments of gayety to approach the brink of what is wrong. It is of the greatest possible importance to preserve the mind from the taint of cunning and deceit; and therefore we ought to be more anxious to avoid doing too little than too much to secure this point. Simplicity and integrity of character, the great foundation of everything good, depend upon it.

6. Do all you can to secure a consistency of system in the management of your children.

It is quite apparent how indispensable it is that the father and mother should at least not counteract each other. If they do not and cannot think alike on the subject of education by mutual concessions and accommodations, they should pursue a similar plan with their children. Grievous are the consequences when they proceed differently. The children presume to erect themselves into judges between their parents: they play off one against the other. Not only one parent sinks in their esteem, but they often lose respect for both, and are disobedient to both. Thus the fifth commandment is habitually broken; and bad principles and bad habits are as likely to be established by education in a young family, so circumstanced, as good ones. Let me entreat parents to shun this fatal rock. If one of them is conscious that the other is best qualified for the work of education, let such parent be disposed to yield points as far as duty will allow, and to strengthen the hands of the other. And even that other, instead of presuming on superior ability in this line, and carrying matters with a high hand and peremptorily insisting on points respecting which there may be a difference of opinion between them, should be as accommodating as can be made consistent with duty; and where a point cannot be yielded, still the *suaviter in modo* should be practised with peculiar care, and the necessary duty performed in a way as little grating and offensive to the parent who disapproves, as may be. Let the more enlightened parent recollect, that an indifferent plan of education, in which parents harmoniously join, will generally answer much better than a superior one respecting which they differ. Besides, by kind accommodations, the misjudging parent is often won by degrees to see

things in a more just light, and to acquiesce in a better system. Where both parents act on principle, and refer to the Bible as their standard, and do not interpret it in a very different way, a degree of accordance which will answer pretty well for practical purposes, may reasonably be expected. The greatest difficulty arises when one of the parents does not act on principle, or refers, substantially, to a different standard from the other. Even in these distressing cases, the *sua viter in modo* on a true Christian foundation will do wonders. It often disarms hostility and counteraction, and leaves the young family very much in the hands of the parent best qualified to educate it. And I fully believe, from personal observation, that the Divine blessing rests in an uncommon degree on the labors of a Christian parent so unhappily circumstanced, and fruits follow excellent and abundant beyond all human expectation. With what pleasure have I seen a majority of the young members of a family, most lamentably exposed to temptation by one parent, snatched out of the fire, as it were, by the pious and constant, but meek and unassuming, labors of the other !

In families where the parents proceed harmoniously and well in the work of education, their plan is often lamentably counteracted in the nursery or the school-room. If the children are indulged there in bad tempers and habits ; and still more, if they there meet with bad examples ; with passion, or pride, or deceit, or a love of ease and luxury ; all may be undone which is done in the parlor, and perhaps more than undone : notwithstanding all the efforts of the parents, the progress of the child may be not in good, but in evil. Even on the most favorable supposition, the fruits produced by the exertions of the parents, will be scanty

and crude. The bias of nature will be so in favor of what is wrong, and so against what is right, that if Divine grace did not wonderfully favor the exertions of true piety in education, the task of the parents would be hopeless. How carefully then, should nurses and others, who are put about children, be selected? And how attentively should the course of things in the nursery and the school-room be watched and regulated? To this end, the nurse or the governess should be impressed with a sense of the very high importance which the parent attaches to good tempers and good habits; to which must be added, good principles, if the child is old enough to understand them. But it will by no means be sufficient to do this in a general way. It must be done in detail and by example, and with a persevering, but not a harrassing recurrence to those points which seem to be not sufficiently understood, or not properly carried into practice. The vigilant eye of the parent will always be wanted to keep things in the right course, as well as to put them in it at first. It must be laid down as a principle, that nothing must be concealed by the child.

That vile maxim against telling tales out of school (vile, when applied to keep parents in ignorance) must be utterly proscribed; and openness and confidence must be zealously cultivated, both in the child and in those who have the charge of him. But the parents must not trust to being informed of everything important to be known. They must delicately but effectually make the requisite inquiries; and also take care by personal inspection (conducted, however, with kindness and delicacy to the nurse or the governess) to ascertain the real state of things. But, with all that can be done, it will seldom be found possible to put the

management of children in the nursery on a truly good footing. The class of persons to be employed is so ill-educated and unenlightened ; and such of them as are pious are generally so injudicious, that not only the plan of the parent with the child will scarcely ever be even tolerably maintained when the child is out of his sight, but positive and serious evils will be produced and cherished. It is highly important, therefore, that the child should be as much with the parent as circumstances will permit. Every hour in the society of a parent who understands education, and pays proper attention to it, is an hour gained to moral improvement, and (as far at least as regards children yet in the nursery) is too often an hour redeemed from what is far from deserving that appellation. In whatever way the child is employed, whether in talking or playing, a moral lesson may be instilled, moral habits may be encouraged, and bad ones repressed : the parent will continually be obtaining a greater insight into the child's character, and the child greater affection for its parent. Thus good will be doing, and a foundation laying for still greater good. Indeed, God seems to me to afford no slight ground for presuming that children should be much with their parents, by making the society of each so pleasant to the other, where the parent performs his part as he ought, and the child has not been spoiled by excessive indulgence in some other quarter. But the evidence of his will, which arises from the benefit resulting to the child, and also, I believe, to the parent, from this intercourse, is irrefragable and decisive.

It often happens, however, that there is an inconsistency in education more to be deplored than any which has yet been mentioned :—this is the inconsistency of the parent with himself. The author of the Epistle to

the Hebrews, contrasting the correction employed by parents with that used by the Almighty in his government of his true servants, says, "They," (the parents,) "verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." What a picture is this! God, the sovereign proprietor of all his creatures, invariably pursues the good of those whom he deigns to call his sons, in all the discipline to which he subjects them; while man, who can call nothing his own, who is a mere trustee under the Almighty, who, in his conduct towards his children, should always bear in mind that both they and he are bought with a price, and that not his own gratification, but the will of God, should be his rule in all he does as a father,—man presumes to forget his imperious duties in education, and to make it his object to please himself rather than his sovereign Lord! If one did not continually see the fact, one should not believe it possible that the work of education would be so often carried on under the supreme influence of selfishness. His own ease and convenience, and the indulgence of his own feeling and humor, frequently seem to engage a father's first attention in his proceedings with his children; and, except in striking cases, which oblige him, as it were, to depart from so lax a system, the good of the child is clearly made in practice, though not in theory, a secondary object. So true is the description of the apostle: he proceeds according to his own pleasure, rather than for the profit of his children. When education is not conducted so very ill, and the good of the child is *generally* the main object of the parent, and his own inclinations are *generally* made to bend to it; yet, in many families, this is by no means so entirely the case as it

ought to be. When the stimulus to self-gratification is strong, the parent yields to it, the rules of good education are violated, and the child is injured. The injury will be (unless God avert it) in proportion to the extent of this fault. Some portion of it is found in all parents: but I am speaking not of a few thinly scattered instances rarely occurring, such as must be expected from so weak a creature as man even in his best estate, but of its more frequent recurrence, to the serious interruption of a good system of education.

Now it is clear that this fault, to whatever degree it may exist, is an enemy to consistency of conduct. As it proceeds from the parent yielding to a different motive from that which ought to actuate him, and sometimes at least does actuate him, when with his children; this new motive must lead to different results from those which would flow from the other, and produce inconsistency. But this is by no means all. A man under the influence of self-indulgence is inconsistent with himself. He will conduct himself towards his child according to his present humor. One hour he will be indulgent, and the next severe: at one time he will allow his child to do things, which at another he will forbid. The child will also find out that he can carry points by management;—by making his request when the parent is in a yielding humor, or by bringing him into such a humor by coaxing and wheedling, or by overcoming his objections by importunity. Inconsistency must be the consequence: and an inconsistency the more to be deplored, because it will be connected with a diminution of respect for the parent who is the author of it, and with the practice of cunning and art in the child,—habits of mind most adverse to all that is good.

The very high importance of consistency must be clear to your readers. Will children be likely to value good principles as they ought, when their parents do not steadily act upon them, and enforce them? Will good habits be rooted and fixed in the child, when he is allowed at times to indulge in the opposite bad ones? Will he be led to see the beauty of holiness of heart, and of holy conduct, when he is *allowed* at times to taste the sweets of sin (for every fault is a sin) from which he ought to be weaned, and when he finds his own self-indulgence sanctioned by the self-indulgence of his parent? "The ways of religion are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace;" but to those only who steadily walk in them. They have no charms for those whose conduct is marked by frequent or gross inconsistencies.

7. Spend much time with your children; encourage them to be free before you; and carefully study their characters.

For what is education? It is co-operating with the Divine Spirit in forming the mind and changing the heart of an immortal being, weak and corrupt, averse to the change to be wrought in him, and whose nature is made up of various parts, and differs greatly in different individuals. Is it possible to doubt, that what is above recommended must be necessary in this work? Can too great pains be taken where so much is at stake? Can success be rationally expected, unless great pains are taken, and your labors are enlightened and judicious? And can you flatter yourself that you take due pains, or that your labors will have a proper direction, if you give little time to your arduous task, and do not employ proper means for becoming well acquainted with the characters of your children?

It is wonderful that a parent can *hope* to be an effectual instrument under Divine grace, in leading his children from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, by proceeding in the way in which religious education is often conducted. Is it not generally true, that even in religious families, more thought and care, and time are employed in teaching children to read, than in teaching and persuading them, by God's help to be real Christians? The father sees but little of those who are young, and much less than is desirable of such as are older. The first he considers as scarcely at all under his care ; and though he probably gives some instructions to the latter, they are commonly such as are more calculated to enlarge their knowledge, and improve their understandings, than to regulate their dispositions, and make them new creatures. His avocations often are such as to make it impossible for him to be a great deal with his children ; but he generally might be much more with them than he is ; and, when with them, might employ the time much more usefully, for the promotion of their best interests, than he does. It often happens that they are under a degree of restraint in his presence, which, added to the little time he spends with them, prevents his obtaining a deep insight into their characters ; and therefore, many evils either escape his notice, or he adopts some wrong mode of correcting them ; and many a tender germ of good passes unobserved, and withers for want of his fostering care.—The mother is much more with her children, but generally, I think not so much as she ought to be. This is the more to be lamented, because women are admirably fitted for training their offspring in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. They have a remarkably quick insight

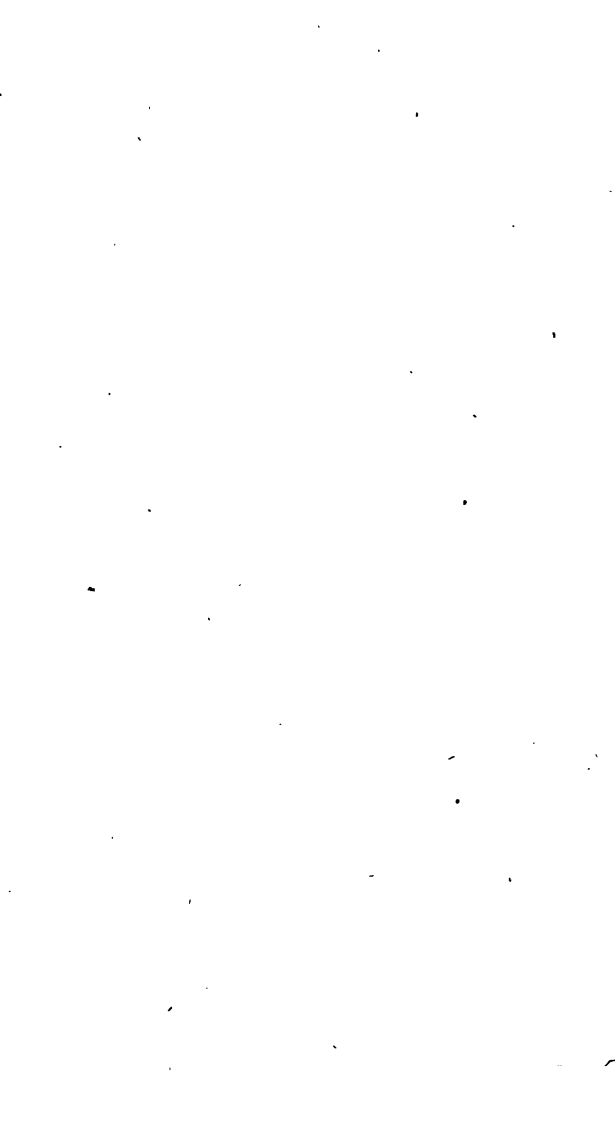
into character ; and a warmth of affection, a tenderness and a delicacy, which win the affection of others, and enable them to correct faults without giving offence, and to present Christian principles and virtues to their children in their most amiable form. I believe that there has seldom been a man who had a good and amiable mother, that has not in after life looked back on her instructions and example with reverence and delight. Cowper's admirable little poem, on viewing his mother's picture, touches the hearts of all of us, because it describes scenes and feelings dear to every virtuous mind ; scenes and feelings of which many of us have partaken, and all wish to partake. Every hour which a Christian mother spends with her children has balm on its wings. She contrives to make even their pastimes a moral lesson ; and though she cannot (and it is not desirable that she should) make their regular lessons a pastime, yet she adapts them well to the abilities of her scholars, accommodates them well to times and circumstances, and divests them of whatever is oppressive and revolting. To mix the pleasant with the useful, is at least as important in education as in poetry ; but good mothers far exceed good poets in that art. Surely, then, a mother should be jealous of everything which keeps her from the bosom of her family ;—a sphere in which she is so gifted to shine, and to be a blessing to those most dear to her. How sad it is, when she throws away this pure gold for mere dross, by giving up those hours to an excess of visiting and company, or even of reading, which ought to be spent among her children ! And how sad, too, when such high powers to train her young charge for Christ and glory, are not under the guidance of an enlightened judgment, or receive a

wrong direction ! I have been grieved to see maternal sensibility much more alive to the bodily than to the spiritual health of the objects of its solicitude : electrified when there was an idea that a child had received some slight hurt, but little moved while it was contesting a point with a nurse, or teasing a brother : and I have been much more grieved, when I have seen it fall into partiality and favoritism ; or exhaust itself in anxieties about the persons of the girls, to the comparative neglect of their understandings, and to the great injury of their feelings and dispositions ; or employ itself in heaping on them accomplishments, instead of leading them on in useful attainments and Christian habits ; or yielding to the influence of humor and caprice ; or (worse than all) giving itself over to a blindness to the faults of the objects of its love, and ruining them by indulgence and commendation.

The only plausible excuse which parents, possessing health and sufficient time, can make for not employing themselves actively in the education of their children is, that they put them into hands more fit for that task. This may be a good reason for sending boys, after a certain age, to school, or to a tutor ; though still, even in their case, much remains to be done by parents. Waving, however, the consideration of this part of the subject for the present, the excuse which has been mentioned does not appear to me admissible, under any common circumstances, in the case of girls and of younger boys. Of these, the parents are certainly the natural guides and instructors. They are fitted for this task, by long knowledge of their offspring, by the respect due to them as parents, and by affections and sympathies on both sides, far better than strangers can be. And if they suffer these great in-

struments of good to be lost, or perverted to evil; or if they fail to qualify themselves for their task by obtaining other requisites, and by allotting to it sufficient time, and thought, and care, and pains; they must be answerable to God. They may, with much propriety, call in assistance, especially in the mechanical parts of education; but should always consider themselves as keeping the higher branches, which respect the principles, dispositions, and habits, chiefly in their own hands.









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